

*FLORIDA IN  
THE XVI<sup>th</sup>  
CENTURY,  
DISCOVERY AND CONQUEST*

*María Antonia Sáinz*

Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, conqueror of Florida and founder of the oldest town in the United States, San Agustín, combined grandeur with ruthlessness. His character was typical of many figures associated with the history of the New World in the XVIth century. He is the main protagonist in this book, but by no means the only one. From its discovery in 1513 by Ponce de León, Florida was a compelling target for many Spaniards; the permanent penury to which they were condemned in this recently discovered territory is a revealing contribution of this book. To provide a broader picture, María Antonia Sáinz devoted a part of her study to the indigenous peoples living in Florida in the XVIth century with whom the Spaniards came into contact.

María Antonia Sáinz (Valladolid, 1950) is head-teacher at the Seminario de Historia and Director of the Instituto de Bachillerato no. 2 in Las Rozas (Madrid). Her work is in the old and almost forgotten tradition of research by Secondary School teachers who have contributed so much to Spanish culture.







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# FLORIDA

## FLORIDA IN THE XVI<sup>th</sup> CENTURY, DISCOVERY AND CONQUEST

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MARÍA ANTONIA SÁINZ SASTRE

FLORIDA  
IN THE XVI<sup>th</sup>  
CENTURY,  
DISCOVERY AND CONQUEST



EDITORIAL  
**MAPFRE**



*To Paula, Saruca and Pepe,  
three heros in the story  
of my life.*

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## INTRODUCTION

I have always felt that one of the great lacks among Americans of this country is their knowledge of the whole Spanish influence and exploration and development in the 16th century in the Southwest of the United States, which is a tremendous story. Unfortunately, too, Americans think that America was discovered in 1620 when the pilgrims came to my own State, and they forget the tremendous adventure of the 16th and early 17th century in the southern and southwestern United States.

John F. Kennedy  
President of the United States

When Juan Ponce de León arrived in Florida searching for a spring whose water, an old legend advised, would restore youth and vigour to the old, he opened a chapter in Spanish history which was to be both harrowing and enthralling. At first it seemed to Ponce that he had happened upon just one more island, but in fact, the event was rather more pivotal: for from then on, over the subsequent two and a half centuries, the histories of North America and of Spain were to be closely interwoven. Can anyone claim to be acquainted with the history of either of these two cultures without appreciating this period of shared history? For the large number of Hispanic peoples now living in the United States, it represents a watershed which could perhaps be commemorated for marking the beginning of this common experience. Hispanics after all, now make up the largest minority in the United States (some 10 % of the population), and their contribution to the current dynamism of the country is undeniable.

Part of my intention then is to explore the episodes of the discovery and conquest of Florida in some depth, so as to come to a greater understanding of the present character of the two peoples. In

spite of these forgotten centuries, they do all the same maintain close links with each other in their daily lives. The prestige and influence which Spain commanded in the Americas in the 16th century was such as to leave a profound impression on the states of North America which, even today, has not been entirely erased. It is my belief that it would be desirable to recover this early Spanish element more fully if we are to enjoy a real spirit of co-operation and mutual understanding.

I want therefore to explore the nature of the Spanish experience in Florida, from the time of its discovery by Ponce de León in 1513, until the establishment of the first stable settlements there in 1565. In order to ascertain the reasons for the successive failures of the first series of expeditions, we need to examine each early endeavour at conquest in turn, all of which had been led by resolute, idealistic men backed by ample material resources.

At no point, it seems, did Charles I or Philip II question the wisdom of building a Spanish base in this vast arc of the new continent, even when they were fully aware that Florida would never serve any particular commercial interest for the Crown. Indeed, the undertaking to conquer and colonise Florida soon became the most costly project in the whole of the new world.

The reason probably was that the port of San Agustín, now the oldest city in the US, was thought to guarantee the safe passage of the Spanish fleet in the Caribbean. Laden with gold and other precious metals, they would regularly return to Spain from Mexico and Portobello via Havana, across the Bahama Straits. Meanwhile rival European powers lay in wait; while they dared not officially install themselves on territory which the Pope had already formally granted to the Spanish monarch, they were quite prepared to turn a blind eye to those of their compatriots (turned privateers) who regularly marauded Spanish ships laden with enviable bounty. So once Pedro Menéndez de Avilés had at last succeeded, after enormous effort, in establishing a land base, it became seemingly imperative to pursue a strong defensive strategy. The forts at San Agustín were to be held at all costs and the militia there were to stand firm in the face of the hostility of the indigenous population, the inclement climate and the violent ocean storms, which obstructed and sometimes prevented the arrival of provisions. To this end, the Crown was to go to immense

lengths, and it looked to Menéndez de Avilés as the chief architect of this epic operation.

The Crown's generous acknowledgement of Menéndez de Avilés in his lifetime appears to have been reversed by subsequent «Adelantados» of Florida, for until recently, his life and works have barely been touched on by historians. This constitutes a serious historical lacuna. Indeed the scarcity of allusions to him in both Spanish and North American chronicles seems in many ways an injustice. Menéndez's achievements after all marked the end of a series of grave misadventures for Spain in Florida, as well as the beginning of the permanent Spanish settlements there (once the French had been finally routed) and the start of the Catholic mission on the mainland of this part of North America. It is therefore of particular interest to gain a clearer picture of this formidable 16th century figure. Indeed though he dedicated most of his life to Florida, he was also considerably active in other spheres of the Spanish empire in the 16th century, (always in the service of the Crown). He was thus a key element in the politics of the moment.

The dearth of historical inquiry, which I have mentioned, covers not only Menéndez de Avilés himself, but Florida in general, and indeed all those Spaniards who journeyed there, whose voyages, conquests and expeditions are remembered almost exclusively in the accounts and testimonies which were written by the protagonists themselves. For this reason the available source material lacks the rigorous analysis so essential in any historical interpretation. But it is perhaps unfair to allege that this merely derives from a want of historical curiosity. For not long after the conquest, members of later expeditions arriving there from Spain were to notice a particularly sluggish and negligent attitude on the part of officials presiding in the region, except, that is, for the Crown's particular envoys, who had to cope with a torrent of bureaucratic and fiscal difficulties. The listlessness amongst these officials contrasts particularly sharply with the vision of the earlier conquerors, who were sufficiently inspired to finance the undertakings themselves, in many cases staking their entire personal fortunes on a project. For, once the richer spheres of influence had grasped that there were no precious metals to be found in Florida, they strongly resisted providing any kind of assistance for further

initiatives. Latterly such projects came to be seen as poor or even wasted investment.

Even Pedro Menéndez's voyage, given the personal blessing of Philip II, and considered of great moment (in view of the menacing presence of the French in the area), suffered, like the others, from a lack of both official funding and moral backing. These two elements would have been greatly welcomed, since many obstacles did in fact hamper the progress of this key project. These were only overcome by the perseverance and vision which were to become characteristic of the «Adelantado».

They found no gold there; nor did they find the pass of Anián which many had hoped would lead them to a new source of spices. All Pedro de Menéndez's predecessors had died in their attempts to conquer Florida, and even the missionaries had had to hastily abandon their efforts on the peninsula. Florida came to denote a somewhat unfortunate period in the conquest of America, and since it did not involve an exotic or a large scale conquest such as that which had occurred in Perú or in Mexico, it has until today passed almost entirely unnoticed. Nevertheless, the important strategic role the area played at the time, the influential position it holds today, together with the fact that it represents an early stage in the Spanish conquest of the northern part of the continent, suggest that it warrants rather more attention.

The historical neglect which I have identified has meant that it has been inordinately difficult to compile information on the subject. Of the few published sources, the majority are based directly on the accounts of those who took part in the voyages. The most far-reaching Spanish studies about Pedro Menéndez, for instance, have done little more than collate the correspondence between the «Adelantado» and the king with the testimony of Solís de Meras<sup>1</sup>.

The first European to arrive in Florida was of course Juan Ponce de León in 1513, who named it thus for having first descried the land on the day of «Pascua Florida» (Easter Day, but as referred to in Spanish: Florid or Flowery Easter). I have made use of documents

<sup>1</sup> E. Ruidíaz Caravia, *La Florida, su conquista y colonización por Pedro Menéndez de Avilés*, Madrid, 1892, 2 vols. Solís de Meras' testimony has been wholly transcribed in vol. II.

relating to his two journeys (1513 and 1521) which also cast light on the motives which impelled him to embark on an alternative course of action during the Spanish reconaissance of the new continent<sup>2</sup>.

The accounts of the journey of Pánfilo de Narváez and Alvar Cabeza de Vaca<sup>3</sup> are amongst the most spectacular as well as absorbing narratives, for they give a vivid impression of the character of their expedition. Once they had been turned back by the Indians and then by fearsome storms, the whole affair became a veritable odyssey for the remaining three survivors, who ended their journey walking for more than seven years from the Atlantic to the Pacific across the entire northern part of the continent. Yet while their epic tales are of undoubted interest, these tracts have to be read with considerable caution since geographic errors, wild exaggerations and vagueness of expression are frequent.

Because of its important geographical interest, Hernando de Soto's expedition has certainly aroused the most attention. There are therefore a number of surviving monographs, some written by people who actually took part<sup>4</sup>, and others drawn directly from such accounts<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> M. Fernández de Navarrete, *Colección de viajes y descubrimientos que hicieron por mar los españoles desde finales del siglo xvi*, Buenos Aires, 1945, 5 vols.

<sup>3</sup> A. Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, *La relación que dio Alvar Cabeza de Vaca de lo acaescido en Las Indias, en la armada donde fue por Gobernador Pánfilo de Narváez, desde el año de veintisiete hasta el año de treinta y seis, que volvió a Sevilla con tres de su compañía*, Zamora, 1542. This was republished in 1986, by A. Faviata and J. Fernández.

<sup>4</sup> L. Hernández de Biedma, *Relación de la isla de La Florida*, in *Colección de varios documentos*, tome 1, London, 1857, p. 49. This version was presented to the Council of the Indies by its author. Fidalgo de Elvas, *Expedición de Hernando de Soto to Florida*, Madrid, 1956.

<sup>5</sup> El Inca Garcilaso, *La Florida del Inca. Historia del Adelantado Hernando de Soto, Gobernador de La Florida y Capitán General*, Madrid, 1976. This work, as Aurelio Miró Quesada shows in his prologue, is a historical novel which, while not departing from any historical truths, enlivens what happened with an account which is much more attractive than mere description would be. The tales are narrated by Gonzalo Silvestre who accompanied Hernando de Soto in the Captain ship, the *San Cristóbal*, and was one of the few survivors who returned from the tough expedition.

The oral tales by Silvestre are, then, the main basis to this work: «conversing for a long time and in different places with a great gentleman friend of mine who once went there, and hearing many great exploits that he had achieved there, the Spaniards as well as the Indians, it seemed unworthy, as well as a pity, that such heroic things should have happened and yet are committed to oblivion. I feel obliged to both nations, because I



The main part of this book will concern itself with the expedition of Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, for which I have used the small number of existing published sources which include diaries or memoirs. However, the abundant correspondence between Pedro Menéndez and Philip II, his family, friends and various authorities have been the real basis of my research, for they provide such a clear account of the facts. Some of the letters have been published <sup>6</sup>, although the greater part of them are to be found in the Archive of the Counts of Revillagigedo, to which I have been privileged to have had access, thanks to the kindness, generosity and historical sensibility of Don Alvaro Armada, Count of Guëmes, and without whose assistance and encouragement this book would never have been written.

For its special quality, I would like to draw attention to Solís de Meras' memoir. The grandson of Pedro Menéndez, he accompanied the latter on his voyage to Florida and on the various different excursions he undertook into the hinterland. The memoir is however incomplete and only spans the period from their arrival in 1565 until 1568, the date of Menéndez's first return to Spain. It thus makes no reference to what happened from then until his death in 1574. This important document once formed part of the collection in the Archive of the Counts of Revillagigedo, where it was transcribed by Ruidíaz Caravia <sup>7</sup>. Today however, the original has disappeared and the complete work can thus only be found in the latter version <sup>8</sup>.

Shorter and less extensive are the memoirs of the chaplain of the expedition, Francisco de Mendoza Grajales <sup>9</sup>, together with those of García Genaro <sup>10</sup>. García Genaro almost always consulted Solís de

am a son of a Spaniard and an Indian. I therefore often begged that gentleman that we write that story. I would do the writing».

<sup>6</sup> L Tormo Sanz, *Siete cartas de Menéndez al rey desde el 13 de agosto de 1565 al 30 enero siguiente*, Madrid, 1958, vol. II, pp. 899-943. E. Ruidíaz Caravia, *op. cit.*

<sup>7</sup> E. Ruidíaz Caravia, *op. cit.*, tome 1, pp. 1.336.

<sup>8</sup> There is a new edition published by Editorial Istmo in 1989 which, because of the interest of Ruidíaz's work, complements the French version of events.

<sup>9</sup> F. Mendoza Grajales, *Relación del viaje de Pedro Menéndez de Avilés*, in Joaquín F. Pacheco, Francisco de Cárdenas and Luis Torres de Mendoza, *Colección de documentos inéditos relativos al descubrimiento, conquista y colonización de las posesiones españolas en América y Oceanía*.

<sup>10</sup> García Genaro, «Life and works of Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, gentleman of the



Meras as his basic reference, but he did not limit himself, like Solís de Meras, merely to the chronicling of events. He included additional information from other sources and applied his own interpretation.

For a very specific aspect of the affair, notably Captain Juan Pardo's journey into the interior of Florida in 1566 at Menéndez's orders, I have made use of Juan de Labandera's diary <sup>11</sup>.

Direct accounts, like all documents of this kind, are bound to involve involuntary geographical errors, since the protagonists often barely knew where they were, much less where they were going to. But the historical value of these sources is indisputable for they provide a daily account of what exactly happened, and they also give a valuable impression of the awe, amazement and fear which these men experienced on the wilder shores of the new continent.

It is evident that Menéndez did not leave for Florida accompanied only by a troop of soldiers. The official appointments of his relatives in Florida in his time was to continue later on as well, for in the 17th and 18th centuries they were still occupying prestigious posts. His family biography, to which I have given special attention, is in fact an immensely important document in the study of Florida's history as well as other areas of the new world (Cuba and Mexico for instance). But the fact that other documents consulted have not always coincided with some of its details has meant that using its material has not always been straightforward <sup>12</sup>.

Works in English have not been numerous either, though there have certainly been more than in Spanish. Perhaps the greatest surprise in reading them has been that they have assembled largely the same documents which I have cited above as being the only ones available for the study of the area and the period. So for example, Harris <sup>13</sup> has reproduced many of the narratives of contemporary authors <sup>14</sup>, often

Orden of Santiago, Adelantado of Florida, where the conquest and populating of the province of the Indies is dealt with in some detail». B. Barrientos, *Dos antiguas relaciones de La Florida*, Mexico, 1902. As far as the fourth centenary is concerned, in the city of San Agustín, in honour of Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, the University of Florida has drawn up an edition of this work in ancient Spanish and English, the original copy dating from 1568.

<sup>11</sup> Archive of the Counts of Revillagigedo, leg. 23, F.

<sup>12</sup> C. Miguel Vigil, *Pedro Menéndez de Avilés*, Gijón, 1897.

<sup>13</sup> H. Harris, *The discovery of North America*, Amsterdam, 1969.

<sup>14</sup> B. de las Casas, *Brevísima descripción de la destrucción de las Indias*, Madrid, 1982.

doing so literally. In the description of the voyage of Vázquez de Ayllón, he uses an exact transcription of the narrative by Francisco López de Gómara<sup>15</sup>, a classic of the Indies, which has always been and always will be used, due to the lack of officially endorsable documents.

Naturally, I have also consulted general histories or narratives of the discovery of the Americas<sup>16</sup>, among which perhaps the only one which had any specific angle on events in Florida was that of Padre Zubillaga who was writing in order to justify the abandonment of that locality by the Jesuits. The rest provide fascinating general information which conveys an indispensable sense of difference between the various centres of conquest and colonization and so helps to reveal the real character of events in Florida.

In this introduction I have tried to show that, until the present, the period of Spanish rule in Florida has not had historical attention it deserves. It is thus the more necessary to emphasize that things are now changing. In recent years a series of eminent historians in the US have produced some remarkable studies of Florida's hispanic era. Of these, those of Michael V. Gannon and Eugene Lyon stand out. The latter is the author of an excellent work on Pedro de Menéndez<sup>17</sup>, in which he writes:

A Herrera, *Historia general de los hechos de los castellanos en las islas y tierra del mar océano*, Madrid, 1934, tome XII. F. López de Gomara, *Historia general de las Indias*, Madrid, 1965. A. and A. García Carraffa, *Enciclopedia heráldica y genealógica hispanoamericana*, Madrid, 1960. The numbers 1 to 86 are published, which includes up until V; the documents on this subject in the A.C.R. have also been consulted.

<sup>15</sup> F. López de Gómara, *op. cit.*

<sup>16</sup> *Exploradores y conquistadores de Indias*, Madrid, 1964. In this work, the testimonies of Bartolomé de las Casas, Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, Luis Hernández de Biedma, Francisco de Gomara, etc. are once again collected. G. Fernández de Oviedo, *Historia general de las Indias*, Madrid, 1851-1855, 4 vols. González Barcia (Gabriel de Cárdena Z. Cano), *Ensayo cronológico para la historia general de La Florida 1527-1722*, Madrid, 1723. L. Hernández de Biedma, *Relación de la Isla de la Florida*, in Codoinao, tome 1. A. Herrera, *op. cit.*, tome XVII. F. López de Gomara, *op. cit.* J. López de Velasco, *Geografía y descripción universal de las Indias*, compiled by the cosmographer and chronicler from 1571 to 1574, and published for the first time in the *Boletín de la Sociedad Geográfica de Madrid*, in 1874. F. Zubillaga, *La Florida, misión jesuítica, 1566-1578, y la colonización española*, Rome, 1941.

<sup>17</sup> E. Lyon, *The enterprise of Florida. Pedro Menéndez de Avilés and the Spanish Conquest 1565-1568*, Gainesville, 1983.

The years of the Florida conquest not only feature complete knowledge of this vital aspect of the history of Florida in those years<sup>18</sup>.

This challenge deserves to be heeded on the Spanish side. Indeed, I feel much would be gained from greater collaboration, of both an intellectual and a personal nature, with colleagues on the other side of the Atlantic. I would like to thank these prestigious scholars for the quantity and the exemplary character of work they have accomplished.

This book would never have been achieved without the help of various other people besides. Firstly, Profesor Pedro Pérez Herrero, who not only taught me how to carry out research, but also to enjoy it; Álvaro Armada, Count of Guëmes, whose family has played such an important part in our history for some ten centuries, and who has provided me with the basic information for the study did, as I have already mentioned, given me much assistance; and Ignacio H. Larramendi who, aware that my name might not have been heard of the world over, made room for it amongst a host of illustrious authors. I very much hope that he does not feel he was mistaken.

Finally, my sincerest thanks go to the dear friends who gave me so much encouragement so constantly. I fear there were so many that I cannot mention them all here. To all of them, thank you.

<sup>18</sup> E. Lyon, *op. cit.*, p. VII, preface.







I

JUAN PONCE DE LEÓN

The voice of my hoarse breast, which professes  
Noble sentiments in gentle lines,  
Desires perfection in her promise  
As well as the deaths of invincible men;  
Juan Ponce de León sets a shining example  
With deeds that might seem impossible;  
Indeed, as became notorious, he lived  
Less life than he lived glory.

Elegy VI on the death  
of Juan Ponce de León

DISCOVERER OF FLORIDA

Juan Ponce de León, who was born in San Servos (León) in 1460, began his career in the service of the Crown at an early age, fighting against the Moors of Granada. This was routine practice amongst the upper classes in 16th century Spain.

His first experience in the Indies was with Columbus, when the latter undertook his second voyage there in 1493. During the confrontations with Indians that took place in the ensuing expedition, his sheer audacity greatly impressed his companions. After these feats, he was told about the island of Borinquen (which was famed for the animosity of its inhabitants), and he soon asked for and then obtained leave from Nicolás de Ovando to conquer it. (The Spaniards re-named this island San Juan, it being on that day in 1508 that they had first berthed there.) But the period from 1508-1512 during which Ponce tried to take charge on the island was immensely fraught due mainly to the hostility of the local people. There were constant riots and Ponce was hard put to control the situation. But the indefatigable single-mindedness and military skill that he demonstrated in Borinquen

soon became celebrated; the fame he earned there would in fact lead to the opportunity to captain the expedition which would discover Florida, without him ever actually proposing it.

It is not precisely known what the spur to this first Spanish voyage to Florida was. Some argue <sup>1</sup> that there was no particular purpose, only an unfocussed but ardent desire on the part of the conquerors to flaunt their valour to the Crown, as well as to seek personal fortunes, of course. When Ponce de León was «pacifying» the island of Borinquen (now Puerto Rico) for instance, he soon discovered that attacks from Indians were not in fact the chief threat, for certain Spaniards such as Juan Cerón and Miguel Díaz in particular were found to be behaving with such extraordinary tactlessness towards the local Indians that they only provoked and intensified the riots. Ponce expelled both officials to Spain in disgrace, but when they reached home they were soon able to buy back their liberty, after which they set about a campaign to sully the name of the Governor, alleging that he had been abusing his authority and that he was now accustomed to sending anyone into exile who was not prepared to bow mindlessly to his will.

King Ferdinand <sup>2</sup>, who was always fearful that another power would some day establish itself on the new continent and thus supplant the Spanish crown, took these recriminative reports at their word and swiftly nominated Juan Cerón and Miguel Díaz as «Alcaide» and «Alguacil» respectively to govern the island <sup>3</sup>. One imagines that they were then able to force Ponce de León to take his leave of Puerto Rico— where he was now facing oppressive political circumstances, personal frustration and temporary discredit as governor of the island.

Though it might seem a rather bizarre motive today, it oughtn't to be forgotten that the objective which had first engaged Ponce was to discover a spring whose waters were believed to contain extraordinary curative and rejuvenating powers. Indians had informed him that it lay somewhere to the north, in a place known as Bimini <sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> A. Herrera, *op. cit.*, tome III, chap. X, p. 316, Década I.

<sup>2</sup> On the death of his wife, Queen Isabella in 1504, Ferdinand of Aragon carried on as Regent until 1516 when he died.

<sup>3</sup> A. Tapia y Rivera, *Biblioteca Indiana*, «Historia de Puerto Rico in the xvth, xvith, xviith and xviiith centuries», 1854, pp. 148-149.

<sup>4</sup> Bimini, an island in the Atlantic facing the southeastern coast of the Florida peninsula. The passage between it and Florida constitutes the Bahama straits.



Ponce de León was not alone in believing in the faculties of this spring; Pedro Mártir de Anglería<sup>5</sup> referred to them in his first «Décadas»:

...There was some mention of a spring, whose mysterious powers were said to be such that to drink its waters or to bathe in them, would bring renewed youth to the old and jaded... I do not deceive myself that such things go against the lessons of philosophy and particularly of medical science. But since we read that eagles renew themselves and that snakes shed their old, outer skins it doesn't therefore so astonish me that an enchanted spring possesses miraculous powers.

Undoubtedly we would have to belong to that century to grasp how such an idea was able to galvanize an entire expedition which involved so many sacrifices. Ponce de León was then fifty-two years of age, (which was considerable for the 16th century) but he was in love with a young girl from whom he had been separated for many years. It doesn't however appear that this was Ponce's sole criteria for embarking on this new expedition. As I have already mentioned, he needed to disentangle himself from the intrigues at San Juan, and he wanted to explore other islands, as he had done at La Española and Puerto Rico; at all events, once he had decided to set off on a new journey, he opted for Bimini, where he had elaborate expectations.

With this aim in view, he appealed to Don Fernando, who consented on the 23rd of February 1512<sup>6</sup>. The concession which Ponce obtained demonstrates the prestige he commanded and the high opinion in which he was held at Court. The same consent had been

<sup>5</sup> P. Mártir de Anglería, *Libros de las Décadas del Nuevo Mundo*, Década VII, París, 1907, vol. II, book VII, pp. 623-628. J. Castellanos, *Elegía a la muerte de Juan Ponce*, Canto Séptimo, Puerto Rico, 1980, p. 89. «Entre los más antiguos de esta gente, habían muchos indios que decían de la isla Bimini, isla prepotente, donde varias naciones acudían por las virtudes grandes de su fuente, donde viejos e mancebos se volvían, y donde las mujeres más ancianas deshacían las arrugas y las canas... Cuán rico, cuán pujante, cuán potente, pudiera ser el rey de tal fuente!». V. Muga Sanz, in his book *Juan Ponce de León*, Puerto Rico, 1971, pp. 118-120, has some interesting opinions by different historians about the spring of youth which Juan Ponce de León was supposedly looking for.

<sup>6</sup> D. Ramos, *Audacia, negocios y política en los viajes españoles de descubrimiento y rescate*, Valladolid, 1981, pp. 519-523. Codoinao, tome XXII, p. 33. M. del Vas Mingo, *Las Capitulaciones de Indias en el siglo XVI*, Madrid, 1986, pp. 162-166.

previously sought by (and denied to) none other than Bartolomé Colón, Columbus' elder brother. Through this contract, which was to stand for a period of three years, Ponce was given the right to conquer any territory that had not been previously occupied by Christopher Columbus<sup>7</sup> or by the King of Portugal. (With the latter, Spain was at the time enjoying close relations which thus demanded a certain mutual respect, particularly with regard to the Indies.) Ponce was also made Governor «vitalicio» and «Adelantado» of all the lands of which he might take possession. This was the first «Asiento» ever dispatched which dealt with the territory soon to be known as Florida, as Ponce himself named it.

In accordance with the terms of the contract with the King, Ponce set sail from the port of San Germán (Puerto Rico) on the 3rd of March 1513. Juan Garrido, the first African in the new world, was a member of this expedition. He had arrived in Portugal bearing the status of a free man, and once he had been converted to the Christian faith, he made his way to Sevilla. From there, having found it difficult to enter the closed society of the old world of the 16th century, he embarked for the Indies in 1502 in search of a new life. From the moment he made Ponce's acquaintance, Garrido was to accompany him on almost all of his voyages including the Bimini expedition which in fact discovered Florida and he thus became the first African in the land of what is now the United States<sup>8</sup>.

The fleet which was made up of three ships<sup>9</sup>, was piloted by Antón de Alaminos, who plotted a route through the Bahama straits, leading to a position whence, for the first time, they were able to make out the tract of land which was to be Florida. This was on the 27th of March 1513, on Resurrection Sunday, the day of «Pascua Florida» (Easter Sunday, literally «Flowering» or «Spring Easter») the name with which they christened the land - which they actually took to be an island. They arrived just at the mouth of the river of San Juan, not far from what is now San Agustín, and motivated partly by the hostile

<sup>7</sup> A.G.I., Indiferente General, leg. 418, book 3, p. 252.

<sup>8</sup> R.E. Alegría, «El primer negro libre en América», *El Nuevo Día*, Sunday, 10th June 1990, San Juan de Puerto Rico.

<sup>9</sup> The ships were called *Santa María de la Consolación*; Juan Ponce de León voyaged in the *Santiago* and the *San Cristóbal*, A.G.I., Contaduría, 1701.

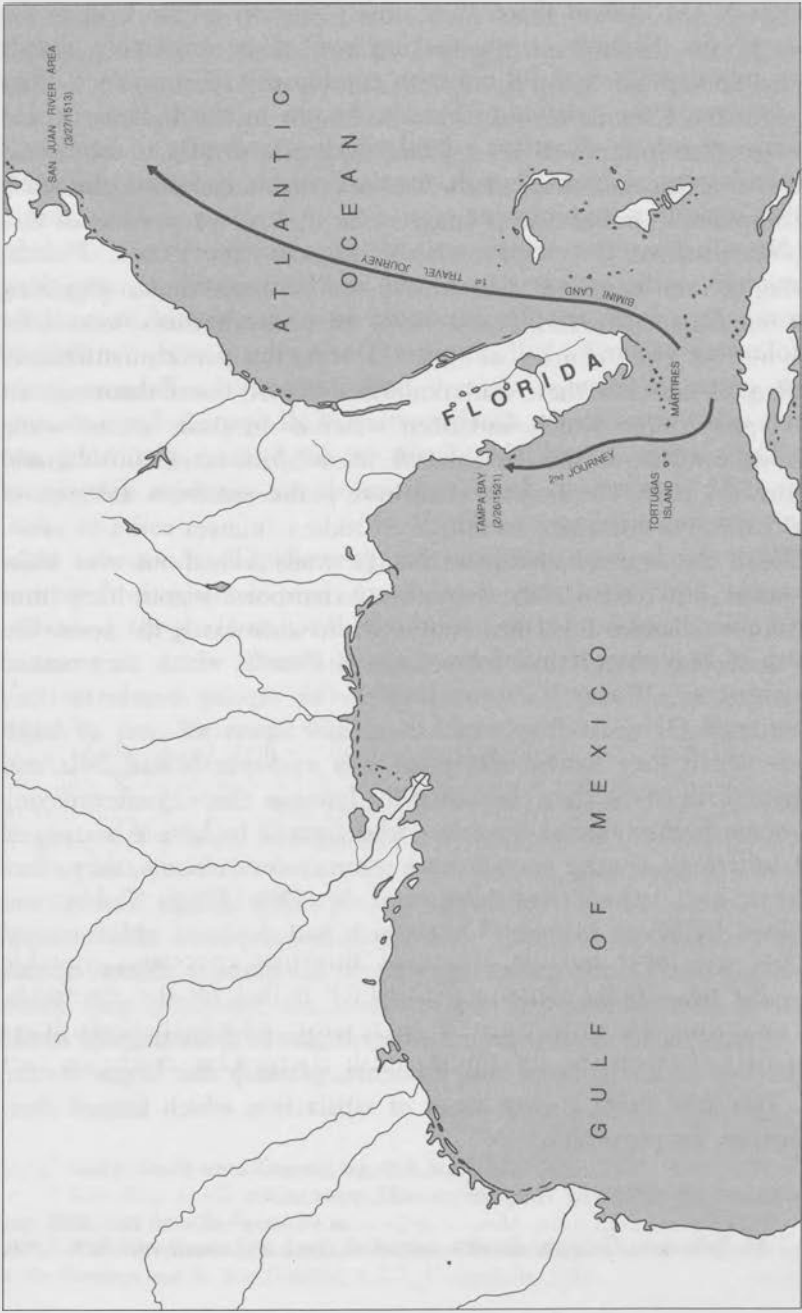
reaction of the Indians there, they took possession of the land in the name of the Spanish crown making use of an extremely simple ceremony in which they did not even employ any religious rites. They had discovered the «island» of Florida, known to the Indians in that particular region as «Cautio», a land which was shortly to be bound into the history of Spain, though, for the Spanish, it proved ultimately a rather inglorious involvement.

Nevertheless, this event was of singular importance. Florida, understood as the greater part of the northern continent, stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific, would be under Spanish control for the following two and a half centuries. During this period, the territory was a centre of strategic defense both because the Bahama straits became a key point in the usual itinerary of all Spanish fleet returning from the Caribbean and New Spain to the Spanish peninsula, and because the territory at large constituted the northern frontier of Spain's empire in the new world.

With the joyful enthusiasm that generally fills those who make impressive discoveries, they decided to circle the island; they thus altered course and headed in a southerly direction along the coast. On the 8th of May they rounded the Cape of Florida, which they named «Corrientes» (Water Currents) after the strong currents they encountered there. As they went, they came upon an array of small islands which they named along the way as Santa Marta, Pola and Mártires (15th May); they christened the latter in this way after making out «some human figures from afar who seemed to have a bearing of great suffering.» During one of these reconnaissance circuits, they came across a boat, which had been sent by Don Diego Colón and captained by Diego Miruelo<sup>10</sup> but which had departed without royal authorization. However, after agreeing to accompany Ponce on his enterprise, Miruelo drowned in a storm.

After voyaging for two months, they began to think that the island which they had discovered was immense, possibly the largest in the area. This gave them a great sense of satisfaction which fanned their enthusiasm for proceeding.

<sup>10</sup> M. Ballesteros Gaibrois, *La idea colonial de Ponce de León*, Puerto Rico, 1960, p. 73.



Map of Juan Ponce de León's journeys. Discovery of Florida

The Spaniards wandered cautiously about these islands until the 4th of June, when an Indian presented himself to them. He revealed that he understood Spanish, and then advised them to stay in that place, for the Cacique Carlos (the most important in the area) would be prepared to bring them gold. While they were trustingly waiting for the treasure that so enlivened their hopes, they were ambushed by a large number of Indians, who killed a considerable proportion of this party of Spaniards <sup>11</sup>.

Ponce soon began to realise that he would never find any gold or silver mines on this island, even though the Calusa Indians, (who were those he had made contact with), seemed to be wearing small chunks of these metals; but these had doubtless slipped from the cargo of some Spanish ship which had been wrecked on those shores while returning with its precious freight from New Spain or perhaps Central America to Spain. The Indians must have plundered the wreckage and been bemused by these unusual, sparkling minerals which they proceeded to wear as charms. In 1513 Mexico had not yet been conquered, but the Spanish were already transporting gold back from the Gulf of Darién. Escalante Fontaneda <sup>12</sup>, who was held captive by these Indians for more than ten years, wrote:

...though there are no gold or silver mines here, the people have got rich from the sea since many a ship has lost its cargo of gold and silver nearby... and I see them coming and going with great bars of silver and gold of considerable richness, together with bags of coins and many clothes....

But the most notable aspect of this first encounter, notable partly for the serious consequences which it had for the Spaniards, was the unusual, unrestrained aggression which these Indians immediately unleashed on this Spanish party. One might in fact

<sup>11</sup> Ch. Lowery Woodbury, *The Spanish Settlements within the Present Limits of the United States, 1562-1574*, New York, 1959, tome I, p. 142.

<sup>12</sup> H. Escalante Fontaneda, *Memoria de las cosas y costa y indios de La Florida, que ninguno de cuantos la han costado no lo han sabido declarar*, in Codoinao, tome V, pp. 544 siguientes.

deduce, as Swanton <sup>13</sup> was to do, that this was not the first time that these Indians had come into contact with Europeans. No doubt there had, at some earlier date, been unauthorized incursions by Spaniards seeking out slaves to sell in Havana. The Indians' fear and their quite natural suspicion thus became outright hostility, a posture aimed to prevent visitors staying on their territory. But in spite of these considerable hazards, the Spaniards were not prepared to give up an undertaking which had hardly begun and they therefore continued sailing between the smaller islands on the coast, carefully allotting a name to each. Still in the vague hope of stumbling upon the enchanted Bimini, they reached Bahama on the 25th of July 1513, where they stayed until the 6th of August. They were greatly disheartened that they had not achieved their goal nor accumulated riches of any kind, and the gradual loss of their numbers during the constant, bitter confrontations with the Indians undermined the spirit of the adventurers. For this reason, on the 23rd September Ponce decided to return to Puerto Rico, but at the same time he made sure to send the captain Juan Pérez de Ortubia and the navigator Antón de Alaminos on in search of the island which had eluded them. In fact these two did actually find Bimini, which A. Marban <sup>14</sup> believes was what is now Andros, but they never did find the charmed fountain of youth.

They reached Puerto Rico on the 21st of September 1513, after a cheerless, arduous journey. Despite their disappointment however, the expedition should hardly be considered a failure. They had after all discovered the Bahama straits and the so-called «island of Florida», which would soon be seen to open up into the immense territory of North America, and which Ponce described on his return as not particularly rich but definitely delectable. Juan Pérez de Ortubia and Antón de Alaminos returned to the port of San Germán on the 20th of February 1514 <sup>15</sup>, where Ponce was waiting, and together they all set off for Spain, partly so as to give King Ferdinand a full account of the

<sup>13</sup> J. Swanton, *The Indians of Southeastern United States*, Washington, 1946, Bulletin 137, p. 35.

<sup>14</sup> A. Marban, *La Florida; cinco siglos de historia hispánica*, Miami, 1979, bilingual edition, p. 84.

<sup>15</sup> V. Murga Sanz, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

events in Florida but also to petition him for further permission to return and to colonise the land which they had just discovered.

## SECOND VOYAGE TO FLORIDA

The new «Capitulación», which was in effect a continuation of the previous one, was granted on the 27th of September 1514 in Valladolid<sup>16</sup>, but it here specified in particular that they should aim to colonize rather than to conquer the land in question, and it went on to insist on the liberty of the Indians and on the need to create better working conditions for them; in addition, for the first time it mentioned the title of «Adelantado of Florida and of Bimini», referring thus to the conquest of both islands. At the same time the Queen, Doña Juana dispatched a series of injunctions relating to the same issue. Armed with these fresh mandates, Ponce de León left Spain on the 14th of May 1515 bound for Puerto Rico, where he eventually arrived on the 15th of July 1515.

His intention had been to get to Florida as soon as possible, but a further outbreak of rioting on the island as well as the death of his wife Doña Leonor detained him in Puerto Rico. In fact he was to delay for more than six years before setting off again. Harrassed by colossal economic difficulties, which demanded huge increases in official assistance, together with the mortgaging of his entire personal fortune, he was only able finally to set sail on the 26th of February 1521 (from the port of San Germán) which he did accompanied by two caravels, fifty horses, a large amount of provisions and two hundred men, among whom were a certain number of priests who had been included by royal request. (Juan Garrido, the African, also accompanied them.)

In the midst of fierce, successive storms they arrived in Florida near the «Bahía de Tampa» (Bay of Tampa)<sup>17</sup>, which from then onwards would be known amongst Spaniards as Juan Ponce Bay. Again the Indians were hostile. Hardly had they disembarked from their

<sup>16</sup> D. Ramos, *op. cit.*, pp. 524-527. M. del Vas Mingo, *op. cit.*, pp. 166-169.

<sup>17</sup> Tampa, situated on the Western coast of Florida's peninsula, in the Gulf of Mexico.



ships, than they were fallen upon so viciously that only seven soldiers escaped alive apart from the Adelantado who was seriously injured. Ponce, aware perhaps that the gravity of his condition was sure to deteriorate, or simply because he was so fervently bent on recovering, gave orders to be moved to Havana right away, a destination close enough to Florida should he wish to return to accomplish his mission. A few days after his arrival however, he died. His son Luis then inherited the «Adelantamiento» from the King as well the other titles his father had collected, but, shut away as he was in a religious order, he never made use of these privileges.

So twice Ponce had tackled Florida, and had sunk his entire personal fortune in both attempts, but each undertaking was ultimately unsuccessful; furthermore, apart from finding neither gold nor the fountain of eternal youth, Florida's discoverer was also to meet his death in that arduous land. Certainly no one could have foreseen how problematic or how intractable a challenge this terrain was to pose to practically all its Spanish invaders. On his tomb, there is an epitaph, which though short, somehow fastens the spirit of this man:

In this sepulchre rest the remains of a man who was a lion by name  
and by nature <sup>18</sup>.

The body of the first Adelantado of Florida remained in Cuba until 1559, when it was transferred to the church of San José <sup>19</sup>. There the corpse stayed until 1863 when it was disinterred and the remains were shuffled between different places in the church of San José, and then placed in the crypt of the main altar where they remained from 1892 to 1908. Since the latter date, Ponce's remains have rested in the Metropolitan Cathedral of San Juan of Puerto Rico, where they can be found today. On his tomb is the following inscription:

<sup>18</sup> G. Fairbanks, *History of Florida, from its discovery by Ponce de León in 1512 to the closed of the Florida war in 1842*, Philadelphia, 1871.

<sup>19</sup> The church of San José is today considered to be the oldest in Puerto Rico, and the second oldest in the Americas. It was first called the church of Santo Domingo, later the church of St. Thomas Aquinas, and today, San José.



At the time of the pontificate of His Holiness Pius X and while Monseignor William Jones was occupying the Episcopal seat of Puerto Rico, the mortal remains of Juan Ponce de León were moved to this Cathedral from the convent of St. Thomas Aquinus [today San José] where they had been deposited since 1559. Born in Tierra de Campos, his noble lineage led him to carry out daring deeds. A soldier in Granada, a Captain at La Española, conqueror and Governor of San Juan of Borinquen. Discoveror and first Adelantado of Florida, valiant soldier, shrewd leader, loyal vassal, honest administrator, loving father, hard-working and consistent colonist. He gave his soul up to God and his body to earth in Havana on the 4th of June 1521. To his venerable memory, and in honour of the Christian civilization which was introduced on his instigation, for his bravery and for the diligent cooperation which he displayed on this fertile land of Puerto Rico, the Spanish Casino of San Juan pays pious homage.

MOLE SUB HAC FORTIS REQUIESCANT OSSA LEONIS  
OUI VICIT FACTIS NOMINA MAGNA SUIS.



## II

### LUCAS VÁZQUEZ DE AYLLÓN

#### THE FIRST ESTABLISHMENT

Once Florida had been discovered, it seemed to hold out a fresh horizon of hope for Spain and her Crown, but it was necessary now to explore the territory and to establish a permanent base there. Lucas Vázquez de Ayllón was eager to carry out this task, but knowing full well how disastrously Ponce had been defeated in 1513 and how aggressive the Indians had been, he sent Francisco Gordillo on a reconnaissance voyage beforehand. Gordillo arrived in Chicora<sup>1</sup> in 1520 where he blatantly betrayed the welcome and the hospitality of the Indians. His idea was to pay off the cost of the journey by deceiving his hosts and seizing many of them to sell as slaves on his return to La Española for work in the mines.

The news of such outrageous behaviour disgusted Ayllón, frowned on as it was by the greater part of the population and in particular by the King. It thus brought disrepute to his own name in the eyes of the Spanish, and was very likely to blacken the image of his people as a whole.

As Ayllón had feared, sections of the Church, headed by Friar Bartolomé de las Casas, were put on the alert by these events and they proceeded openly to demonstrate their profound opposition to such conduct. For these reasons, the Crown refused to give authorization

<sup>1</sup> To the northeast. There the River Jordan can be found: Santee is in today's South Carolina.

for the next expedition that Vázquez de Ayllón sought to engineer. It was thus made quite clear what sort of attitude the conquistadors were expected to adopt with respect to the Indians.

In fact, in view of Vázquez de Ayllón's character, this misgiving on the part of the Crown was ultimately unnecessary. He was born in Toledo in 1475; he came from a noble family and had obtained a Law degree, a qualification which was rather unusual amongst conquistadors, who generally rose through the armed services or the Navy. Indeed, it used to be joked of Ayllón that he had never before put on a breastplate; his vocation as an explorer was an enormous surprise to everyone. However because of his intellectual background, Nicolás de Ovando (Governor of the Indies) had named him «Oidor» (Judge) of the Audiencia of Santo Domingo on the island of La Española, so that he was in charge of important administrative tasks, which even took him to Mexico as a royal mediator in the dispute between Cortés and Diego Velázquez. In La Española, he married a rich heiress, Doña Ana de Becerra.

In spite of Gordillo's ill-judged adventure, the latter's voyage and his findings were closely scrutinised by Vázquez, who had a keen interest in that richly fertile land, governed supposedly by a giant. According to Gordillo's reports, pearls and other valuable objects could be found there.

Knowing that his credibility had been damaged after the affair of the slaves, he decided to approach the King in another way, seeing that there was no other option. He asked for his permission to initiate a programme to improve the treatment of the Indians. The agreement between Lucas Vázquez<sup>2</sup> and Charles V was subsequently signed in Valladolid on the 12th of June 1523. The Crown's intentions were expressly laid out in the fifth article:

...you beseech us that the Indians should not, with good conscience, be taken charge of nor distributed so that they serve personally. Experience has shown that there has been much damage and devastation of the Indians' living quarters and that the land has been depopulated on the islands and other areas. I rule that in the said

<sup>2</sup> D. Ramos, *op. cit.*, pp. 558-568. M. del Vas Mingo, *op. cit.*, pp. 192-198.

land there be no distribution of Indians and that they be not forced to serve in personal service even if it be to their liking or of their own free will, and that we pay them as if they were our own free vasals. I command that so it shall be so fulfilled, and that you make sure to dispense good treatment to the said Indians<sup>3</sup>.

This gave Vázquez dispensation to continue in the exploration of Florida, as well as any other island that might be found in the district. He was also given the hereditary titles of Governor and Adelantado. He was promised the favour of further agreements depending on what he achieved in his voyage, and once the King was given notice of what had transpired there.

The preparations for the new expedition went on for more than three years, so that it became necessary to prolong the time-span of the "Capitulación", which generally had a duration of three years from the signing. Vázquez was anxious to choose a navigator with experience who was also knowledgeable of the area. He thus selected Pedro de Quirós, who only the year before had been exploring in that very locality. He had in fact been Gordillo's pilot.

At last, the five ships, carrying some six hundred Spaniards, a number of African slaves, ninety horses and a considerable store of provisions, set off from the port of La Plata (La Española) towards the middle of July 1526. Following the instructions of the "Capitulación", several monks also accompanied the expedition. Friar Antonio de Montesinos was amongst them. He had delivered a famous, impassioned sermon in Santo Domingo of La Española on the 30th of November 1511, for which he became the first person in the New World to denounce the abusive and unjust system of the Encomienda. Father Las Casas was to join forces with this cause and, even though the lobby they then created could not prevent the installation of this system in most of the conquered areas, the appearance of the "New Laws" in 1542 was a direct result of their activity. These were occasioned by one of the greatest social protests in the Indies. The existence of this body of opinion has led some, like Lowery, to emphasise that while it is true that the Spaniards brought black slavery

<sup>3</sup> M. del Vas Mingo, *op. cit.*, pp. 194-195.



Map of Lucas Vázquez de Ayllón's journey

to the new continent, it was also the case that a number of monks came out to stand up for and to fight for the liberty and the dignity of the Indians, and quite a number died in the effort<sup>4</sup>.

Strong winds blew them away from the destination they had selected (Chicora) and they were hurled southwards. However, each attempt at disembarking was an exceedingly complicated manoeuvre, and impossible, in fact, in such adverse climatic conditions. While they struggled desperately in the midst of a wild storm, their largest supply ship was wrecked before their very eyes. This treacherous stretch of coast where they had tried for so long to land would in the future be known as «Tierras de Ayllón».

Once they eventually landed, however, the Indians yet again put up a resentful, hostile front. The memory of Gordillo's betrayal was no doubt fresh in their minds, but they must also have had a strong sense

<sup>4</sup> Ch. Lowery Woodbury, *op. cit.*, tome I, p. 165.

of their vulnerability in the face of this new invasion. At all events, brutal conflicts were triggered off from the very beginning, which much reduced the numbers in the Spanish ranks. Eventually, grieving, tiring and in constant fear of fresh attacks which might have slain them all (for they had by this time been stripped of their weapons), they withdrew to a place which they called San Miguel de Guadalupe as it was immediately next to the river Guadalupe.

They could barely walk and they longed for a refuge of some sort. Cold and hunger so intensified their suffering that they decided to stay in that place and to construct some shelters where they would at least be able to protect themselves until they felt a little refreshed. The shipwreck and the perpetual confrontations with the Indians, who continued to ambush them, began to take their toll: they had hardly begun and already four hundred of them had died; meanwhile most of their provisions had been lost by the wayside.

By this stage the entire undertaking seemed already condemned to ignominious failure for there was now only the tiniest possibility of conquering let alone colonizing. Their only aim was to leave that land which had left them so beleaguered. The majority of the survivors were stricken with disease of one sort or another. The Adelantado himself contracted malaria and died all of a sudden on the 18th of October 1526, the day of San Lucas itself. However he had made sure to make his nephew, Juan Ramírez, his heir beforehand. But Ramírez was in Puerto Rico at the time, so Francisco Gómez<sup>5</sup>, Vázquez's deputy, took charge.

It was not an easy position for Francisco Gómez, for the men he now led could dream only of returning home, and for this they seemed to be prepared even to rise against his authority if need be. Gómez was disposed to continue the march, but a slave soon informed him how his troops were plotting against him, and even planned to murder him. He was thus finally persuaded that it would be best to leave, so they abandoned San Miguel de Guadalupe, which, though never a permanent arrangement, still constituted the first European construction in North America<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> Ch. Lowery Woodbury, *op. cit.*, p. 167.

<sup>6</sup> F. de Varona, *Hispanic contributions to American history 1492-Present*, unpublished.

The return voyage to Santo Domingo was so desperate a scramble that it was as if the Spaniards were fleeing for their lives. Sense should have restrained them or persuaded them to stay put until at least the end of the spring after the testing months of winter had passed, but desperation and fear prevailed as well as an overwhelming desire to get out as soon as they could.

Gales and tempests claimed more of these desperate lives. They perished with the bitter cold or by drowning in the swirling waters. Only a hundred and fifty of them managed to save themselves. Even the Adelantado's body, which was being transported for burial in Santo Domingo, had to be thrown overboard during a particularly violent storm which threatened to overcome the ship in which it was travelling.

With Vázquez's death, no-one in his family inherited the "Adelantamiento" which the "Capitulación" had specified would fall to his heir, for his only male son, Lucas Vázquez de Ayllón, had died in La Española before being able to take up the post.

The Dominicans who had accompanied the expedition fared the same as their travelling companions: when the main expedition withdrew, the missionaries did so too. They had managed to build the first chapel which they dedicated to San Miguel<sup>7</sup> but, on the other hand, they had not been able so much as to make contact with the Indians.

Another Adelantado had perished in another defeat, in which lives, money and a vast human effort were all involved. Strangely it did nothing to discourage later conquistadors. Possibly, the reports of the large scale conquests by Hernán Cortés in Mexico and Pizarro in Perú, which involved dazzling riches and important nuclei of population, made them believe that the interior of the Northern continent must contain similar fortunes, be they tucked away in some recondite spot. This of course was sufficient stimulus for new expeditions.

<sup>7</sup> M.V. Gannon, *The Cross in the Sand*, Gainesville, 1983, p. 3.



### III

## PÁNFILO DE NARVÁEZ

### A GIANT IN THE NEW WORLD

It was certainly not for want of physical strength that Pánfilo de Narváez (1480-1528), the «Vallisoletano» (from Valladolid), described by Luis de Zalamea<sup>1</sup> as a «bent giant with a long red beard», was unable to accomplish his mission to Florida successfully. He was a man of long and sobering experience as well. He had been with Cortés in Mexico, where he had lost an eye, and had taken part in the conquest of Cuba with Diego Velázquez.

One could rightly claim that Pánfilo de Narváez's journey to Florida was the first real European exploration of what is now the United States, for the previous two expeditions had merely dipped along the coast. If groups from those expeditions had disembarked from their ships at all, they had barely moved away from the edge of the shore. The interior was thus still an enigma. Pánfilo and his men set their sights enthusiastically on orienteering in this new terrain. This expedition was to entail the first sustained contact between Spaniards and the Indians of Florida.

Relations between the two peoples would, however, continue to be hostile and awkward, owing basically to the fact that the Spaniards had no settled establishment. Had such a thing existed it would certainly have smoothed the way to greater mutual understanding. Francisco L. de Gómara, the historian, once made a claim in this

<sup>1</sup> L. Zalamea, *España omnipresente en La Florida*, Miami, 1978, p. 24.

respect that echoed clearly throughout the subsequent history of the Spanish in Florida. He wrote, «if a place is not peopled or colonized, it will always constitute an inadequate conquest... the greatest of conquistadors colonize»<sup>2</sup>.

No fixed settlement came about, partly because of the very absence of gold and silver there. It was precisely the ubiquity of these metals in Mexico, for instance, that had justified the settling of a Spanish population there. The lack of these «urban settlements» in Florida was the prime obstacle, not only to a greater affinity with the Indians, but also to the success of the Spanish presence in Florida in general.

As a result the Spaniards were like roving itinerants, simply out to exploit the Indians, to seize their food, clothes, and other possessions, and to lay their hands on their women. They even took some of their people as captives to serve as guides or as slaves, in spite of the Crown's outright proscription of such practice.

But perhaps one of the most remarkable legacies of Pánfilo's journey is that, thanks to the memoirs of Cabeza de Vaca<sup>3</sup> (one of the few survivors of the expedition), important geographical information about this part of America was documented for the first time. These pages also provide an extraordinary insight into the fascinating way of life of those vanished civilizations which often greatly amazed their observers. The diaries furthermore collected copious observations about the fruit and fauna of Florida as they found it, some of which really startled them, as for instance when Cabeza de Vaca wrote:

There are bears, three kinds of deer and some very strange animals with a loose pocket at their bellies which opens and shuts like a bag, and where they put their young when they need to run or flee from danger<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> F. López de Gomara, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 75.

<sup>3</sup> A. Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, *La relación que dió Alvar Cabeza de Vaca de lo acaescido en las Indias, en la armada, donde yba por Gobernador Pánfilo de Narváez desde el año de veinte y siete hasta el año de treinta y seys que volvió a Sevilla con tres de su compañía*, Zamora, 1542. There are a large number of editions of this testimony collected in the final bibliography of the book.

<sup>4</sup> A. Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, *Viajes por Norteamérica. Naufragios*, Madrid, 1958, tome II, p. 23.

This was thus the first extensive report about the territory which the Spaniards had eyed for so long. Thirteen years had already elapsed since it had been discovered, and many more would have to run before they would achieve a lasting presence.

Pánfilo de Narváez, who was actually living in Cuba, made the journey to Spain in order to solicit permission from the Crown to conquer and to colonize the area which stretched from the river of Las Palmas to the island of Florida. This would be accompanied by the title of Adelantado of all the lands which he would discover and conquer.

The "Capitulación" authorizing the requested permission for the conquest was duly signed<sup>5</sup> by Charles V in Granada on the 11th of December 1526. It included the titles and the income which had been granted to previous conquistadors, but added the hereditary title of «Alguacil Mayor» of all those lands. It also stipulated the general instructions that all members of any expedition would henceforth have to observe<sup>6</sup>. The concessions set forth stemmed directly from the series of petitions which Pánfilo de Narváez had himself delivered to the Crown<sup>7</sup>. They were conceded in their entirety. This clearly demonstrates how keen the monarch was to support the enterprise.

With respect to religion, recommendations which had by then become almost standard were as usual insisted upon. These referred to the need to convert the Indians and to treat them fairly. This task was entrusted to a number of Franciscans who were led by Juan de Juárez. Charles V had great hopes of this expedition and he wrote out a programme for the colonization of Florida, which he called the "Instruction for the friars", and which Zubillaga transcribed word for word as follows:

And besides I command that after these Captains, together with the friars and the rest of the men, land on that territory, the first and most important thing to do should be to try, by means of the interpreters (so that the Indians and other inhabitants of that land understand), to tell them and to declare how I have sent you to teach

<sup>5</sup> M. del Vas Mingo, *op. cit.*, pp. 234-238. Codoinao, vol. XXII, pp. 224-245

<sup>6</sup> M. del Vas Mingo, *op. cit.*, p. 235.

<sup>7</sup> Codoinao, tome X, p. 40.

them virtuous ways, and to divert them from vices and sin and the eating of human flesh and in particular to instruct them in the ways of our Holy Faith...<sup>8</sup>.

Pánfilo then set sail from Sanlúcar on the 17th of June 1527 in the company of five ships with some seven hundred people aboard. Among them was an official who acted both as treasurer and «Alguacil Mayor», who would give the expedition a particular character. This was Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca (born in Jerez de la Frontera in 1507, and died in Sevilla in 1559), who was the grandson of Pedro de Vera, conquistador of Gran Canaria.

When they arrived in Santo Domingo, they had to delay for forty-five days in order to restore their energies and to decide how they were to cope after the desertion of about a hundred and fifty men. It would not be the only occasion that this was to occur, nor ought we to attribute it, as it so often is, to the fact that less capable and less socially esteemed individuals had enrolled for this voyage. To journey to the Indies was an extremely enticing prospect, but not everyone was much inspired by Florida itself, which had already earned a reputation for the hazards it contained. It was an easy option for men, therefore, to get involved on any old expedition and once in the Indies, jump ship and break their commitment.

They needed now to look for new recruits, so they left Santo Domingo for Cuba, where they decided to winter in order to avoid the stormy season. They stayed there until their departure in April 1528, with almost the same amount of provisions with which they had set off from Spain.

On Good Friday, the 12th of April 1528, they arrived on the western coast of Florida (Tampa Bay), where Ponce de León had been years before. On putting into land they saw some huts from afar which, when they approached, they found to their surprise were empty. They immediately felt that there was something uncanny in this, and judged it best to take possession of the land in the name of the Spanish King as soon as possible, and to be watchful in self-defence. Their instinct had not deceived them; the following day the Indians of

<sup>8</sup> F. Zubillaga, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

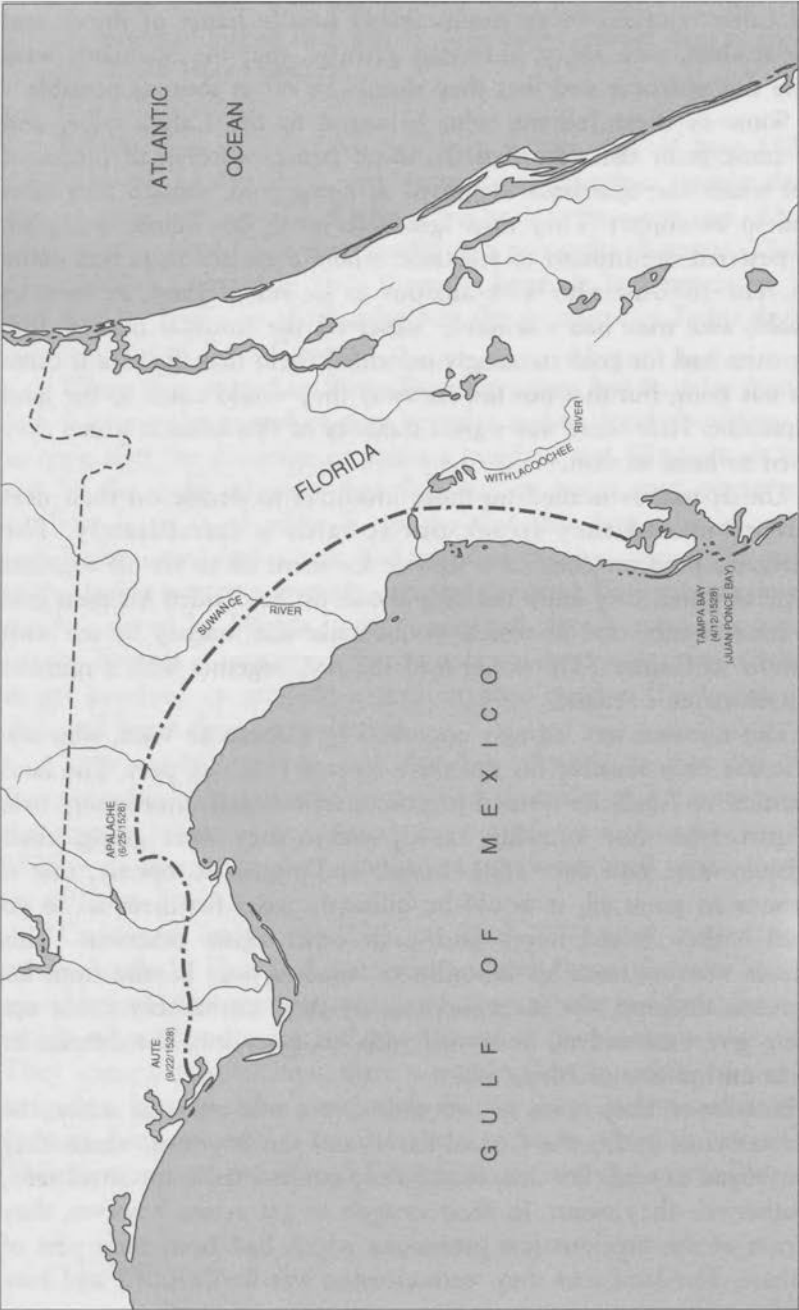
the locality returned in an unmistakably hostile frame of mind, and made it clear, with angry, animated gestures, that the Spaniards were simply not welcome and that they should be off as soon as possible.

Some of these Indians, who belonged to the Calusa tribe, and who came from the region of the same name, wore small pieces of metal which the Spaniards identified as being gold, though they later found to be copper. They thus agreed to leave, but before doing so, they pestered the Indians to tell them where their pendants had come from. The Indians, who were anxious to be rid of them as soon as possible, and who had studiously observed the unusual interest that these men had for gold cunningly informed them that the area it came from was poor, but that not too far away they would come to the land of Apalache. Here there was a great quantity of this mineral which they seemed to hold so dear.

The Spaniards needed no more incentive to decide on their next destination, and they struck out towards it immediately. The Adelantado however deemed it unwise for them all to set off together to a place which they knew nothing about. So he divided his men into two detachments, one of which would make the journey by sea with Caravallo as Captain. He would lead the rest, together with a number of missionaries, overland.

This decision was strongly contested by Cabeza de Vaca, who saw that it was only sensible for the ships to stay in a safe port. The land expedition to Apalache seemed to pose a serious and unnecessary risk, for apart from not knowing exactly where they were going, their provisions were now low. He believed, and argued so openly, that if they were to go at all, it would be infinitely wiser for them all to go by sea - they would never find each other again otherwise. This judicious warning from his subordinate failed to sway Pánfilo from his impetuous decision, for his mind was by then unshakably made up. Having given the orders, he set off with his party into the interior of Florida on the first of May 1528.

Not far on they came to two wide rivers, one after the other, the Withlacoochee (today the Crystal River) and the Swanee, which they were obliged to ford. For this, they hastily constructed some small rafts, but otherwise they swam. In their struggle to get across however, they lost part of the precious few provisions which had been their part of the share. The land that they were crossing was uninhabited and bare



Map of Pánfilo de Narváez's route

and all they could find in the way of vegetation were lean crops of maize. Meanwhile weariness and hunger had begun to set in.

The thought of the safety of the ships soon began to plague their minds. This rose to such a pitch that a mutiny seemed imminent, and Pánfilo (though he strongly resisted the idea) was forced to pay heed to Cabeza de Vaca's argument (for the latter was the most persistent voice of opposition). His argument was that he, Cabeza de Vaca, with a group of some forty men, and the Captain Alonso del Castillo, should set off seawards to look for a port where they might conceivably find their boats. It was a useless search, for after many days traipsing through difficult terrain, they found they had to return to where their companions were hopefully waiting, with only the bleak news that they had found no trace of the ships. They were never in fact to find them, for since they had gone their separate ways, those lucky enough to be in the ships, had been sailing along the coast hoping to glimpse some sign of Narváez. After a year without any trace, they returned to Cuba.

Only the dream of stumbling upon the enticing prospect that the Indians had described gave Narváez and his men the strength to continue to Apalache. To their great elation they finally arrived there on the 25th of June. Their hardships seemed at last to have ended and their punishing effort was perhaps finally to be rewarded.

But on entering the town, all they could find was maize, (a rather insubstantial foodstuff, they had found) and the women and children seemed to be the sole occupants. The latter were greatly intimidated by the Spaniards and they rapidly made off in search of their men. When the men returned, they were decidedly inimical. But although skirmishes broke out and continued for some time, the Spaniards all the same decided to stay in the town in the hope that an Indian would somehow lead them to the precious treasure.

There was, however, no gold; in fact they were never to find any. When a month had passed, their energies were spent, their provisions had dwindled and disease pervaded their ranks. It was not surprising that they felt severely let down. The only way out of this plight seemed to be to make towards the coast once again, in the vain hope of encountering their companions.

They spent more than eight days making their way there. They found their path was flooded by marshy lakes and to trudge through



them became increasingly gruelling and wearisome. To make matters worse, while they struggled through these problematic marshes, a number of Indians fell upon them in surprise attacks; their accurate shots killed many Spaniards and their horses. The Indians in this part of America used sometimes to communicate with one another by lighting a chain of fires from village to village which would shine out over the land like bright stars. This generally served to alert their neighbours that some strange agent or enemy was in the vicinity. If a tribe reckoned that they would be unable to stand up to the possible threat of an advancing enemy, they would flee their locality, but first of all make sure to burn all their possessions that they could not carry with them as well as the surrounding land, so that no-one could take advantage of their property or the land that they had nurtured. The Spaniards were to come across this desolating scenario on many occasions.

When the bedraggled expedition reached Aute, they had little chance of reviving themselves, for their rations had all but run out, and the local inhabitants had destroyed any produce there had been. Having finally given up any hope of finding their companions, they decided to build some rafts and boats to get away as soon as possible.

It is hard to imagine how these hungry, sick men, who were no specialists in the craft, and who did not even have any adequate tools at their disposal, could have managed such an undertaking. It was a mad frenzy, only explicable by the desperate desire that racked them, to return to their homes, and even simply to set sail, for it was much safer for them to cast anchor than to continue on foot.

While they carried out this mammoth task, they soon found they had to dispense with their most treasured possession, their horses. Once every three days they would sacrifice them in a solemn ritual. They then shared the meat between them, giving larger portions to the sick and the most strenuous workers. They did not just eat the meat however; they also made use of the hide and the mane with which they fashioned water bottles and bows for arrows. In memory of this painful episode, the place came to known as the Bay of Horses.

On the 22nd of September 1528, after sacrificing the last of the horses, the two hundred and forty survivors of this punishing journey sailed away without knowing where they were heading, but knowing that what they most needed to find was some sense of security which



had been lacking ever since they had arrived there. The ships were captained by the treasurer Alonso del Castillo and Andrés Dorantes, the captains Téllez y Peñalosa, and Alvar Cabeza de Vaca, as well as by Narváez himself<sup>9</sup>.

After some days' navigation, they reached an island, which made a narrow channel with the Continent, and which they called San Miguel. But there was still no let-up in their oppressive circumstances. There was no food available, they were ill, and above all thirsty, desperately thirsty, for the bottles made of the horses' hides had rotted. Many in fact died from drinking the salty water.

It would have been folly to have made for the open sea in these conditions. They thus continued up the coast and, on the way, they came to a number of islands, at which they cautiously stopped to see if they could disembark and obtain some supplies of fresh water. They approached a small Indian town, where the inhabitants, perhaps pitying their lamentable condition, provided them with fresh water, fish and blankets with which to cover their nakedness and to warm them in the extremely low temperatures that had now descended on them. The Spaniards were not entirely taken in by the unusual hospitality that these Indians elaborately displayed, but they were in no condition to refuse anything. When they were more relaxed, however, they found themselves viciously attacked. They never discovered whether this had been perpetrated by their hosts, or by another tribe of Indians, more virulently opposed to their presence. The few Spaniards who survived the combat, fled for their lives and piled into their ships.

Mistrustful though they might have been, they had not had the foresight to prepare for such a misadventure. They were soon without water again, and the majority were now stricken with multiple wounds. In only a few hours, they were overwhelmed by thirst yet again, and their desperation brought them to another island. Here they were to lose more men. The Indians appeared welcoming at first, and they warmly invited them to their houses to drink water, at which a number of volunteers accepted, never to return. Those who did return were a vast army of openly antagonistic Indians. Again the wretched Spanish party had to hastily beat their retreat, without ever being able to ascertain what had happened to their companions.

<sup>9</sup> A. Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, *op. cit.*, tome II, p. 25.

Near the wide, wide mouth of the Mississippi river, a pitiless storm blew up all of a sudden and, to their horror, drove their ships asunder. The blackening turmoil was such that the Adelantado himself begged them all, bellowing from his ship, to «save themselves if they could.» He feverishly declared to his stunned companions that «it was no longer the occasion for a leader to command others; that each should act in the way that seemed best to them, which was to save their lives themselves»<sup>10</sup>. These dramatic words were to be the last farewell. Narváez's ship was lost at sea, never to be found again. However, Cabeza de Vaca, Dorantes and Castillo were each, separately, hurled to another island.

#### ALVAR NÚÑEZ CABEZA DE VACA; AN ODYSSEY ACROSS THE CONTINENT

With only eighty survivors, the expedition had practically collapsed. It had entailed an outrageous number of deaths, miserable hardship, and the squandering of a substantial financial investment. They never knew if Pánfilo ended up in the hands of the Indians or was mercilessly drowned in the sea. What is certain is that he departed this life in Florida. Florida had claimed the life of another Adelantado.

To start speculating as to what might have happened had Narváez originally marked the words of Cabeza de Vaca would lead unhelpfully to an endless series of senseless conjectures. But the facts do demonstrate that his obstinacy and his overblown self-confidence brought his men into treacherous circumstances and ultimately hastened his own death.

If the voyage and the prospect of conquest was at an end, the few men who survived still had many a calamity to live through. Pushed on by the current, their boats were wrecked on an island which they duly named «Malhado», after the desperate experiences that they had there. I shall not labour over the details of all these terrible misfortunes which started from the moment they arrived on the 6th of November 1528, but I would like to give some impression of just how cursed the position of these Spanish prisoners had become. (Some became slaves

<sup>10</sup> A. Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, *op. cit.*, Madrid, 1958, p. 28.

to the Indians which must have been an even more brutal existence.) Details from their own diaries speak for themselves <sup>11</sup>,

those in the huts on the coast began to pass away. The situation became so extreme that the men started eating one another until there was only one left; since he was the last, he had no-one to eat.

It was not the only time that there was mention of such appalling hopelessness. A little further on, it was noted <sup>12</sup>:

[...] and of those who died, the rest made meat packages of them, and the last one who died was Soto the elder, and Esquivel made meat packages of him and by eating him he managed to stay alive until the first of May [...].

Cabeza de Vaca, who had arrived on the island alone, was soon aware that there were other Spaniards around about. But because he had fallen severely sick, he went for almost a year without meeting up with his companions. In the meantime, he had to undergo a truly inhuman treatment. But he finally managed to give his Indian captors the slip, and subsequently, cannily established himself as a merchant. For six years he carried multifarious products from the sea to the interior where, in exchange he obtained skins, cane and anything else that came his way. He thus became invaluable to the Indians, transporting and distributing the goods, which they most needed, into their very midst. In so doing, he saved his own life.

In all this time, the only Spaniard he chanced to meet was López de Oviedo, who abandoned him when he proposed going in search of the others, whom they knew to be captives of the Chorrucó Indians. Later however he managed to find Dorantes and Castillo. Almost immediately they began to prepare for their flight, which had, however, to be delayed for some months in the end. All that time they were on high-pitched alert to the possibility of a surprise assault.

<sup>11</sup> A. Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, *Relación de los naufragios de Alvar Cabeza de Vaca, Adelantado y Gobernador del río de la Plata*, Madrid, 1906, tome I, chap. 14, p. 52.

<sup>12</sup> A. Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, *op. cit.*, tome I, chap. 17, p. 67.

When at last they managed to abandon that troublesome island, they could see that the odds lay against them and that only the acutest ingenuity would save them. But they certainly made a convincing display of this quality when they succeeded in persuading the Indians to believe that they were in possession of special healing powers. At the same time they struck with great fortune when a strange epidemic ran amok in the tribe, and killed a number of the Indians, for these three Spaniards were apparently able to put a stop to it.

It was winter and seeing that they were enjoying great prestige as doctors, the three (who now passed as such professionals) decided to stay there until they would be able to leave when the weather had improved. We do not know if their «therapies» really did save any Indian's life, but theirs were indeed saved, and they became so famous that, before long, the ill and the poorly came to them from far and wide begging to be cured.

Their position had thus improved incomparably since they had become «doctors», even though they saw that this could not last terribly long; they knew they ought not to linger for any length of time in the same place, for any mistake could certainly cost them their lives. Their single objective was to get to Mexico, and with this idea alone, they plotted their path in a westerly direction. It was a colossal trek; at times they found themselves naked and hungry. In addition they had no clear idea where exactly they were, let alone where they they were heading.

On their way they stopped and lived for a time amongst various different peoples. Since they kept an account of their experience, posterity thus retains some fascinating glimpses of their culture. In these diaries they vividly describe their daily customs, their rituals and their physical appearance, which are sometimes accompanied by charming observations or anecdotes, as for instance when they were taken aback by the following practice: «All over the land they seemed to get drunk on smoke»<sup>13</sup>. They were no doubt witnessing the inhaling of tobacco or some other substances. Their narratives thus not only give a keen sense of the wild fate of these three nomads and their

<sup>13</sup> A. Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, *Viajes por Norteamérica. Naufragios*, Madrid, 1958, p. 44.

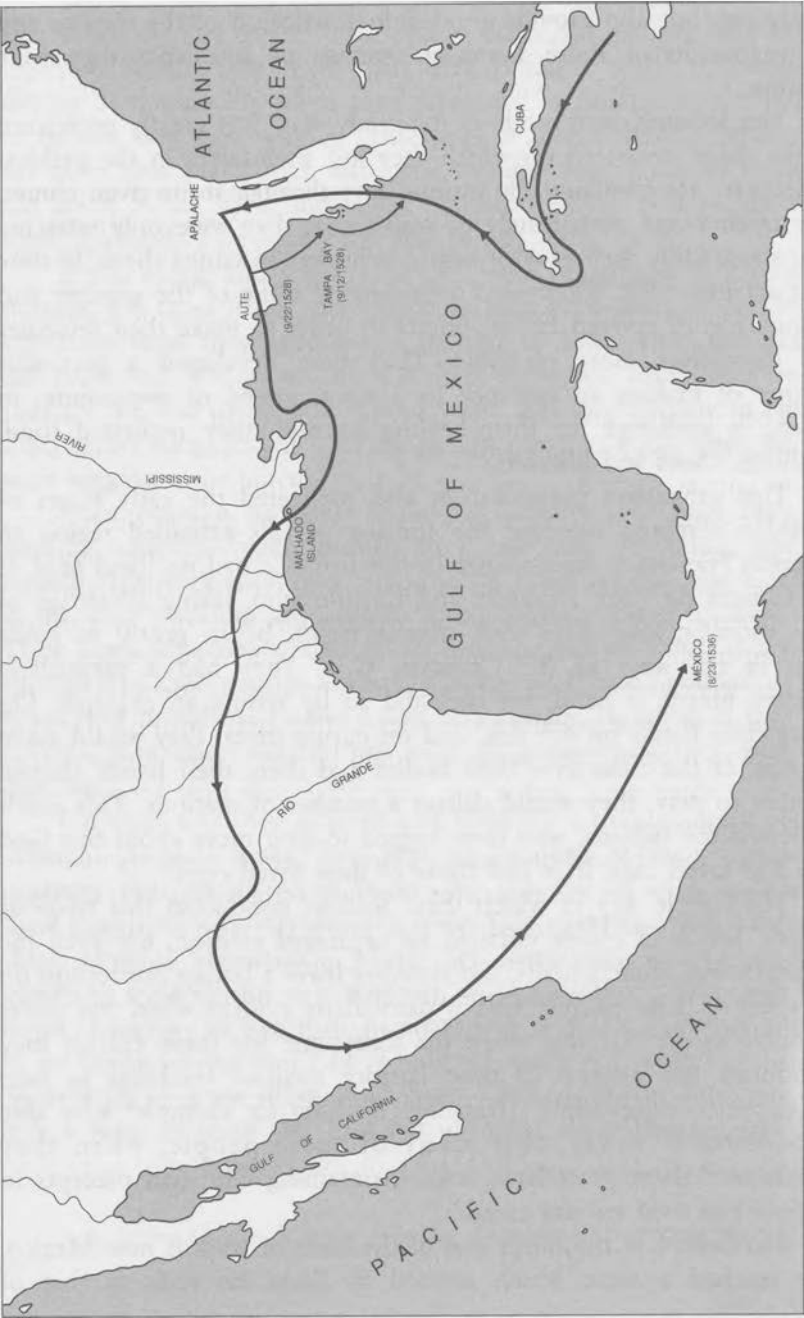
adventures, but also provide a valuable description of the climate and the vegetation of those immense swathes of land that they were crossing.

The journey, mammoth as it already was, was greatly protracted by the many occasions on which they lost themselves in the pathless wilderness. After walking for various days through storm-riven climes, they often began despairingly to realise that they were only retracing their steps. Only their ploy of acting as healers sustained them. In time their act improved. They even appropriated some of the gestures and mannerisms of revered Indian priests in order to make their remedies and themselves more plausible. They then developed a particular manner of making an entrance to a town, aimed to awe-inspire, in which, in exchange for their healing counsel, they requested food, dwellings, shoes and blankets.

This exhaustive peregrination also pioneered the early stages of Christian teaching amongst the Indians of this extended region of America. Franciscan missionaries in this instance had no hand in it. It was Cabeza de Vaca, Dorantes and Castillo who, taking advantage of their sporadic long stays with various tribes, began gently to guide them in the ways of the Christian God. They had a particularly effective means at hand, for they did so by setting an example. On laying their hands on the sick, and on curing them, they would make the sign of the cross over their bodies and then, their hands clasped together to pray, they would deliver a number of orations. This much impressed the Indians, who then begged to hear more about this God who had saved their lives and those of their loved ones.

The simple way in which these soldiers conducted this religious activity, which of course entailed no organised mission, nor even the administering of sacraments, did however leave a lasting impression on the spirit of these people. This is particularly evident when one draws attention to the fact that when the threesome left these villages they abandoned the subjects of their cursory spiritual teachings to fate; subsequent conquistadors (Hernando de Soto for example) were able to confirm however, that many of these people, when they encountered them years later, were maintaining Christian precepts in the midst of their ancient creed.

Somewhere in the north east of the horn of what is now Mexico, they reached a river, which seemed to them «as wide as that of



Map of Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca's route

Sevilla»<sup>14</sup>; it was the Río Grande, although some commentators, Fairfax for instance, have identified it as the Mississippi, and they disagree, for that reason with those who attribute its discovery to Hernando de Soto, years later:

The discovery of the Mississippi has for a long time been erroneously attributed to De Soto; but Cabeza de Vaca and his companions had rested upon its banks before De Soto set out on his expedition, and upon some high bluff by that wondrous stream should be erected a column bearing the simple inscription: one Nuñez de Cabeza de Vaca, in hoc loco primus omnium europæarum fuit<sup>15</sup>.

Their prestige and their business burgeoned. In every town they came to, the people poured out to stare at them and to touch them and to entreat them to come and heal their family and friends. Even when they were not ill, they drew near simply to gaze at them. Some even insisted on accompanying them for a while on their journey. However this provoked serious complications, for the tribal enmities were extreme, and to be seen to be over-friendly with one, jeopardised their impartiality. Such confrontations greatly concerned the Spaniards, for they were worried that they would some day be identified as the ring-leaders of those «agents provocateurs» (the larger Spanish party). If this were to happen, their situation would be much compromised; they were only three men, and it was imperative that they keep up their aura of semi-gods.

When they beheld mountains looming before them, they seemed to embody hope for the three, for they felt certain that beyond them would be the sea. Heartened by this prospect, they continued until they arrived at a town where Dorantes came across the first palpable sign that their ordeal might one day end. Around the neck of one of the Indians hung a little bell, and on the bell was an engraved face; it seemed to follow that since the Indians had not developed the art of engraving, Europeans must have been responsible for bringing it there. The weary travellers had scarcely believed that their roaming would ever come to an end. They had, after all, been shipwrecked eight years

<sup>14</sup> A. Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

<sup>15</sup> G. Fairbanks, *op. cit.*, p. 47.



previously and, motivated only by the enduring instinct to survive, they had forced themselves to move on; the possibility of ever returning to their own homes however, had always seemed to them a far-fetched dream.

With this small incident their morale surged, and they headed north where they were told the bell had been procured. The Indians assured them that they would find others like them there. They wound their way through many towns, and as they went, they dangled the little bell before the people they passed so as to orientate themselves. They had an intuition that their journey was about to end, but the slow, winding road could not keep pace with their racing aspirations. Furthermore, they could not hurry for they were obliged to keep their commitment as doctors. These last days must have seemed interminable.

They crossed the Colorado river but since, on the other side, the land seemed to stretch before them as a vast, empty desert, where not a grain of seed had been sowed, they made the decision to follow the route south instead. Being rather astonished that there was no cultivation of such an essential cereal, they asked the Indians why this was.

They were told it was due to the abundant rainfall which the area was usually prone to, and to the fact that any amount of maize that they required for nourishment was transported from a very sunny area, by sea, which was nearby... It was the Pacific Ocean! However incredible it may seem, these men had traversed the whole of Texas and New Spain and had reached the Pacific Ocean.

Down on the coast, they were remarkably well received by the Indians, who brought them food and pearls (their generosity reached such heights!). But as they went, they kept on finding other gems which were much more precious to them at the time: nails for instance, or chains and other useful things which they knew implied that they were approaching Spanish settlements. The first person they met with was Diego de Alcaraz and his men, of whom, after the first few minutes of confusion and emotion, Cabeza de Vaca inquired the date, the year and the time of that moment <sup>16</sup>.

They arrived in Mexico on the 23rd of July 1536, a whole ten years since their joyful departure from Sanlúcar. There, determined to

<sup>16</sup> A. Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, *op. cit.*, p. 54.



refrain from any more risks, they stayed for the entire winter, which was turbulent that year. They left Mexico for Havana, from where they set sail for Spain on the 10th of April 1537, and their odyssey was at last concluded when they landed there on the 9th of August 1537. One can clearly picture the joy with which they were received by the Viceroy of Mexico, which was an emotional reaction at seeing these men, who had been given up for dead for so long, turn up out of the blue. If we were to make a cold judgement on the course of these Spanish expeditions, it would have to be said of this fantastic journey that ultimately it had a negative outcome. Florida had once again confounded the Spaniards.

However, the three survivors never alluded to the truth of their gruelling adventures. Perhaps they could not quite bear that their expedition should be looked on publicly as a defeat. Instead, they set about describing the marvellous places that they had known and the riches that they had seen. They forgot, or perhaps they were simply anxious to forget, that in the ten years they had been there, they had neither colonised, conquered, evangelised, nor constructed a single fort. In fact none of the terms of the "Capitulación" had been adhered to in the slightest.

This experience, which would surely have encouraged most people to settle into tranquil retirement, seemed to have had quite the opposite effect on its most famous protagonist, Alvar Cabeza de Vaca. His extraordinary journey across the breadth of the Northern continent had increased his zest for risk and adventure, and had nurtured a deep love for the lands he had travelled through. Not long after his return to Spain, he signed a "Capitulación" with the King (18th of February 1540) which authorised him to go to Panama to assist the Spaniards there.

His years of living with the Indians also left a profound impression on him. He had for long suffered at their hands, but had, at the same time, got to know them intimately and had learnt to respect them and to love them.

The rest of his journeys to the Indies were always marked by his adamant defence of the Indians. On one occasion, his attitude even provoked an uprising of Spaniards against him (in Ascensión, on the 25th of April 1544). These incidents in fact cost him a year in prison, and only the interference of Philip II, who shared Cabeza

de Vaca's point of view in this matter, brought him reprieve, against the firm opposition of the Council of the Indies which had condemned him.

## IV

### HERNANDO DE SOTO

#### IN SEARCH OF HIS "PERU"

Hernando de Soto y Gutiérrez de Cardenosa, native of Jerez de los Caballeros in the province of Badajoz (1500-1542), was the second son of a noble family, and bore all the restless characteristics often found in those in such circumstances. Since he was not destined to inherit the prestigious family estate that had so many splendid privileges attached to its name, and since Spain seemed to offer no particular opportunities, he determined on going to the Indies in order to seek his fortune. At the same time, the first son of Méndez de Soto, Hernando's brother, was in need of the capital and the wealth that the New World seemed to symbolize.

At a young, eager age then, and much relishing the sense of adventure, which seemed to capture the imaginations of so many of his generation, he set out for the Indies in 1516, under the captaincy of Pedrarias Dávila, governor of Darién (approximately the territory of what is Panama today), in whose service he stayed until 1520. The following year he took part in an exploration of the coast of Guatemala and Yucatan, until in 1532 he joined forces with Pizarro in the expedition which conquered Perú.

His conduct on this occasion was exceptional. With the Captain, he founded the city of San Miguel, and he was also instrumental in the capture of the Inca leader, Atahualpa. While this was a somewhat controversial move in itself, it became an important milestone in the actual conquest (November 1531), for it was because of this that they stumbled upon the vast quantities of gold and silver.

Atahualpa had taken note of the lust that the Spaniards had for the valuable minerals he had been hiding from them and, as he found himself a prisoner, he therefore offered to fill his cell with gold and silver in exchange for his liberty. The accumulated riches, which were immense, were not however enough to save the Inca leader's life, for shortly afterwards, he was executed.

De Soto returned to Spain with part of the treasure, a rich champion. When he described the riches that he had seen, he unleashed a frenzied desire for gold among many a future conquistador. Meanwhile, his expanded prestige and bountiful fortune gave him all the solid credentials with which to wed the daughter of his former patron, Pedrarias Dávila, Doña Isabel de Bobadilla, whom he married in Valladolid in 1537.

He now had ample fortune to live in comfort for the rest of his days; he moved in a social milieu which easily befitted both the standing of his own family and that of his wife; he even enjoyed the favour of the Crown. All the same, this enviable situation did not entirely satisfy him, for he longed to return to the Indies.

De Soto's expedition undoubtedly had various different objectives, but the evidence that Cabeza de Vaca laid before the King and his court after his seven years spent wandering through the bush, must have goaded his resolve. Fidalgo de Elvas describes the occasion in this way:

...an hidalgo, one Cabeza de Vaca, who had been to Florida, arrived at court... In general, he recounted the miserable state of the land and the hardship that he had witnessed, but when his relations, who were eager to go to the Indies, questioned him about the riches that might be found in Florida, he claimed that he could not say, for he was under an oath of silence which he had sworn with Orantes, for they planned to return to Florida after gaining permission to govern it from the King...<sup>1</sup>.

De Soto had a feeling that this might be his great moment of triumph, in every way, even economically, for Florida could turn out

<sup>1</sup> Fidalgo de Elvas, *Expedición de Hernando de Soto a La Florida*, Madrid, 1965, chap. II, p. 38.

to be a latter-day Perú, and he saw himself thus occupying the exalted position of Adelantado. His fortune was already made, but these reports fed his ambition to explore the area. He even suggested to Cabeza de Vaca that they go together, but the latter rejected the offer, for he wanted to organize his own expedition.

De Soto then enthusiastically set about asking Charles I for permission for this undertaking. On the 20th of April 1537, the "Capitulaciones"<sup>2</sup> were signed in Valladolid, by which he was authorized to conquer and to colonize an area which extended from the province of the river Las Palmas to Florida. The Crown knew, of course, about the great fortune of the future Adelantado and also about the grand hopes that he was staking on the voyage. It was therefore stipulated that De Soto should handle all the costs of the expedition himself. At the same time, however, he was made General of Cuba so that he would be able to provide all the necessary equipment and paraphernalia for the enterprise. He would also be entitled to the "Adelantamiento" of two hundred square leagues to be selected by himself out of the territory he would find, as well as the title of "Alcalde" of three fortresses that he was supposed to construct.

De Soto was organizing the most ambitious of those expeditions that had yet been sent to Florida. So when the news got about that they were looking for people to take part in it, the volunteers came flocking, for they were much inspired both by the Captain's prestige and by Cabeza de Vaca's tales of his recent adventures and of the possible treasures that might be found there. There were certainly no problems in recruiting crew on this occasion, and they even had the luxury of being able to choose the youngest and fittest.

The moment of departure thus brimmed with a spirit of optimism. All the omens seemed auspicious: they had ample means at their disposal, experienced mariners and conquistadors, as well as a young, vigorous assembly, all of whom had a firm commitment to the success of the mission. With these key components, together with five ships, two caravels and two brigantines, the eight hundred men and the two women of the expedition left the port of Sanlúcar on the 6th of April 1538.

<sup>2</sup> M. del Vas Mingo, *op. cit.*, pp. 329-334, in Codoinao, tome XXII, p. 534.

Hardly were they out of port than the first drama occurred. One of the ships sailed out in front of the "San Cristóbal", the Captain's ship, and, by so doing, broke the usual custom that the Captain should sail at the head. The ship was thus mistaken for a privateer and was shelled, though fortunately there were no victims.

They delayed at La Gomera while waiting for Doña Leonor de Bobadilla's retinue, for the wife of the Adelantado was now to join her husband. They then continued their journey until they reached Cuba, where De Soto assumed his right to the Governorship of the island. While there, he set about organizing the main departure for Florida and gave orders to his first captain, Don Juan de Añasco, to do some reconnaissance on the Florida coast, and to look for any possible ports. Spurred perhaps by some dark premonition, he prepared a will in which he asked that, should he die in the expedition which they were about to embark on, they should bury him in the church of San Miguel in Jerez de los Caballeros.

Juan de Añasco and his party soon returned with two Indians whom they proposed to use as guides and interpreters; they had given them to understand, through sign language, that there was much gold to be found in Florida. With this information, the Spaniards began to suppose that it might be one of the richest areas in the New World<sup>3</sup>.

De Soto arranged that his wife, Doña Leonor, be provisional Governess of Cuba in his absence, and, having done so, on the 18th of May 1539, they weighed anchor and set sail in the direction of Florida. On the 25th of May 1539 (a little more than a year after their departure from Sanlúcar), on the day of the Holy Spirit, they were able to make out the Bahía de Tampa, and, as had almost become a tradition, they christened it with the name of the Bay of the Holy Spirit.

Not long after landing, to their joy and amazement, they met a Christian called Juan Ortiz, a survivor of Pánfilo de Narváez's expedition, who had been a prisoner of the Ucita Indians for twelve years. This young man had been shipwrecked on the land of the Cacique Hirrihigua, together with four other companions. They had been captured almost immediately by some Indians, who then

<sup>3</sup> G. Fairbanks, *op. cit.*, 1871, p. 52.

proceeded to celebrate a ritual of revenge for all the havoc they had suffered at the hands of the Spaniards, in which they planned to send their four captives to their deaths. When they had slain the first three, by whipping them mercilessly until they died, the wife and daughters of the Cacique, who were moved by the extreme youth of this the fourth prisoner (he was eighteen years old), begged the Cacique to reprieve him, arguing that he had not been responsible for the cruelties of his superiors, and that anyway it would be much more useful to keep him as a slave.

His life might have been spared, but Juan Ortiz was often to regret this. He was subject to continuous harassment by the Cacique, who was always quite prepared to kill him, and only the interventions of his original protectresses saved him from an untimely death. Once, for instance, he was tied to a burning grid-iron for some time:

...hearing the cries which issued from the fire, the wife and daughters of the Cacique rushed to the scene and, demanding explanations of the Cacique, and even scolding him for his cruelty, they pulled him out of the fire, already half roasted. The blisters that he had on one side looked like the inside of an orange, and some of them were bursting, and much blood poured out of them, which was a sore sight to see...<sup>4</sup>.

Only once did luck fall his way, when one day he killed a puma, an animal that was much feared by the Indians. For a short time after that, Ortiz managed to gain some recognition from his owner, but this was only a temporary let-up to his dreary existence.

The situation continued to be so unbearable for the Spaniard that the elder daughter of the Cacique, finding that not even her supplications could guarantee his survival any more, made some arrangements with a member of the tribe, and having done so, helped him to escape, and showed him the way to the land of the Cacique Mucozo, who was known to be both peaceful and generous. This Cacique took pity on the young man, who recounted the torturous experiences he had been through in the last few months, and he gave

<sup>4</sup> *Historiadores de Indias*, Barcelona, 1985, p. 115.



him shelter and took him into his service. Thus he remained until the arrival of Hernando de Soto.

#### A COLOSSAL EXPEDITION

Ortiz was then incorporated into the expedition, which pleased many of the Spaniards. They thought that he would be of great use to them as a guide and an interpreter, though in fact this was not at all the case. As an interpreter, he was only useful while they moved around in that small area. A few kilometres away the language was already different and Ortiz clearly did not know it. As a guide, he was even less effective for during his first year there, he had been in the hands of Hirrihigua and had barely strayed from the Indian camp. Latterly, though he had been free, he had always been supervised by other members of the tribe. He therefore had no knowledge of the great extensions of terrain that Hernando de Soto's expedition was destined to cover.

In Ucita, which was the first place of human habitation that they came across, they set up camp. They stayed there for some months, rooting out information about the terrain, in particular about any places with a high crop yield. Their efforts were fruitless however, so De Soto decided to set off northwards (which he then did on the 15th of June 1539). However, he took the precaution of stationing a reserve corps of a hundred men, of which Pedro Calderón was to take charge, to stay in the camp so as to keep an eye on the ships. In addition, he sent word to Cuba to tell of his arrival and to request new provisions, for theirs were already beginning to fall rather short.

The land to the north also seemed to provide very little in the way of nutrition. Once they had crossed the river Withlacoochee however, in Ocale, they did find some grain and other rations, which gave them enough to feed themselves for a time and energy to continue their journey. They continued their search for richer lands and, guided by the reports of previous expeditions, it seemed sensible to head for Apalache. However, as the group was rather large and as they also could not be sure of finding particularly fertile soil, De Soto decided to leave a group in Ocale with Luis de Moscoso, so that they



would not all be wearied, while he continued the journey north (on the 11th of August 1539).

They crossed the land of Alachua (belonging to the Potano tribe who paid tribute to the Timucúa), Cholupha and Aguacaleyquem, and in these places the Indians were extremely aggressive. For this reason they decided to rejoin the group that they had just left, for they felt more vulnerable to attacks and weaker being thus separated. On the 4th of September, they had joined forces once again with Luis de Moscoso's party.

The road to Apalache was tremendously arduous, partly because it had rained so heavily, which meant that the rivers that they had to cross on the way had swollen and were the more forceful. They were afraid to cross the Swanee and the Aucilla in the ordinary way, because of the very real possibility of drowning, or of losing the lean supplies of rations which remained. They thus chose to build bridges in spite of their rather small numbers.

Eventually, in October 1539, they reached the land of Apalache, one of the richest areas which this expedition was to see. They decided to spend the winter (of 1539-1540) in Anhaica, a town on the perimeters of the region, for although it was empty, there were considerable food supplies stored there. Six months had almost passed since their arrival in the Bay of the Holy Spirit and they were exhausted; temperatures were low, and they had already had quite a number of confrontations with the Indians, some of which had been serious, like the one that they had had in the district of Napituca. The Adelantado then considered it best to go and rejoin the rest of the men who had stayed behind with Calderón in the Bay of the Holy Spirit. So they returned, arriving there on the 29th of November 1539. Once reunited, the first thing De Soto chose to do was to send Maldonado to Cuba for more provisions. He had trusted that they would have time to wait there until he returned, but the persistent hostility of the Indians drove them to strike camp rather hurriedly (on the 3rd of March 1540), and they moved off towards the province of Cofitachequi to the north, which had also been described as being rich.

The rivers continued to pose the greatest problem for the Spaniards, particularly those over which, for technical reasons, bridges could not be built. The rafts which they had to construct as a result, were often not strong enough and, like helpless coffins, were frequently

dragged down by the current, disappearing amidst the frothing waters before the powerless gaze of their companions. The last of these rivers they crossed, before arriving at Cofitachequi on the 30th of April 1540, was the wide Savannah.

In the region of Cofitachequi, this party of Spaniards had an experience which, for the first time since they had arrived, could be described as pleasant. The area was governed by an Indian woman who came out to meet them in a warm and friendly manner. Her first gesture, to the astonishment of the party, was to present the Adelantado with a great pearl necklace, three rows thick. She then offered him anything he could possibly desire from her rich land, including lodging, for which, if necessary, she was prepared to make some of the living quarters in her town available for them by moving some of her people out of their own homes.

The stay in this province was highly agreeable as well as salutary, for it allowed them to rest and to regain their strength. It must have been a delightful place to settle; firstly they could rely on the generosity and the friendship of the Cacica; the land round about also had a rich harvest of grain; if this was not already impressive, there were also a great quantity of pearls there. Nevertheless De Soto had his eyes fixed on an implacable idea; he was searching for his «Perú». The pearls were certainly a prize, but they did not add up to as much as he had dreamed of discovering. They gave up their idyllic existence and continued on their journey.

When they asked the Cacica about her pearls, she answered:

[...] that in her land there were so many pearls and that, if they wanted they should proceed to the top of the town, (and with her finger, she pointed out a temple) [...] that building is a cemetery for noble men from this town, where you will find pearls of all sizes and much *aljófár*<sup>5</sup>. Take as many as you like, and if you still want more, one league from here is a town which is the house of my ancestors, where you will find so many pearls that even if you load your horses and your persons as well, you will still not have taken nearly as many as there are. Take as many as you like<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> An *aljófár* is a small pearl of an irregular shape.

<sup>6</sup> El Inca Garcilaso, *La Florida*, Madrid, 1988, chap. XII, p. 337.

They found a colossal store of pearls there. So many were there, however, that the Adelantado began to fear that they would give rein to a real madness amongst his men, and thus advised taking only two sacks which would be enough to give an impression of what they had found. Unwillingly they accepted. They would, no doubt, not have continued on their journey had it not been for the Adelantado's assurances of the great possibilities of finding gold mines further on. If they did fail to, he promised them they would return to those generous lands. His men had, by then, been away for more than two years, and they had finally managed to find a rich region, which satisfied most of their ambitions. It was only De Soto's imposing personality that was able to lure his party away from this tempting treasure house.

They journeyed through the provinces of Xuala and Acoste (where they were on the 2nd July 1540) and they reached Cosa on the 16th of July 1540. They were well received in these places but, whenever De Soto learnt that there was no gold to be found in the area, they never delayed themselves for more than seemed necessary for resting or recuperating. Their march was extremely demanding, and they walked for hundreds of miles without setting up any kind of permanent settlement anywhere. They failed to achieve any sort of conquest; they had preached no Christian message to the Indians; nor had they built any fortresses. Their objective seemed to have narrowed to a single aim: the treasure that by now obsessed them.

They crossed Alabama and on the 18th of October, the day of San Lucas and the date of Pánfilo de Narváez's death years before, they arrived at Mavila. Some days before their arrival there they had met with an envoy of the Cacique of Tascalusa (the lower part of the Alabama river) who, in his master's name, offered to give them anything they wanted, and invited them to Athahachi, a small locality where his master was then residing.

The meeting with this Cacique greatly impressed the Spaniards, who described the occasion in this way:

...he was taller than us all by more than half a lance. He seemed to be a giant, and he was; the rest of his body and face were in proportion to his height. He had a handsome face and there was such severity in it that his general aspect seemed to reveal both the ferocity

and dignity of his soul... in all, he was the tallest and most attractive Indian that these Castillians had seen in the whole of Florida...<sup>7</sup>.

They would certainly have looked at him with different eyes, had they known the trap this character was to spring on them.

On the advice of Tascalusa<sup>8</sup>, they departed for Nauvila. As a token of his friendship, he offered to accompany them so that the Cacique of that town would receive them in a way that befitted his new friends. Meanwhile he sent on in advance a number of emissaries to announce their arrival.

Nauvila was a moderate sized town, and it seemed very quiet on arrival. But the Spaniards soon became aware of some fishy goings on, when they noticed that there were hundreds of armed men around but no women or children to be seen. The Spaniards were not alert enough and while they were wondering what they should do, they were set upon by the Indians who initiated the fighting all of a sudden. It was perhaps the severest, most intense battle of the whole expedition, and had some of the most disastrous consequences of all the battles that the Spaniards were to take part in, in Florida. Surprised and surrounded, there was little they could do to defend themselves from so many armed men. The Indian warriors had been strategically stationed so that their arrows flew at them from all angles. About twenty Spaniards died there and then, (among them a brother-in-law and a nephew of the Governor), more than a hundred were wounded and they lost all they had with them. The slaves that had accompanied them, who had carried their goods on their backs, fled and took with them the remains of their stores, including large amounts of arms and pearls which they had brought from Cofitachequi. The horses, essential elements in any conquest, were also lost. About seventy had been wounded.

The Indians had used the towns to protect themselves for it was much safer for them there than in the open country, where they were at the mercy of the Spanish arquebuses and, above all, of the horses, which they thought could crush them so easily. There, barricaded into

<sup>7</sup> El Inca Garcilaso, *op. cit.*, chap. XXIV, p. 367.

<sup>8</sup> It should be remembered that the name of the Indian tribe and their Cacique was often the same as the province or town from which they came.

their houses, they were able to shoot without any difficulty and they caused their enemy serious damage in this way. For their part, the Spaniards were trying to do the exact opposite and to get out of the town which had so effectively trapped them.

Towards the end of the battle, De Soto harangued his men not to give up the fight; he urged them to go back to the town and fight till the death if need be. The troops were not prepared to make such a sacrifice but, gripped by a powerful sense of revenge, they went back, not to fight as the Adelantado had recommended, but to burn the town, though they knew that all their belongings were inside.

The battle was so savage that it had a decisive effect on the fate of the expedition. They were now a bedraggled group of wounded men. They had neither doctors nor medicaments to attend to them, and their supplies of food and clothes had run out. Nor did they even have any shelters for rest or protection against the cold. This was all that remained of these wretched men who now longed to be out of that ill-fated land, even if it meant deserting.

They stayed for about a month in Nauvila. They constructed huts for the severely ill, they flayed their dead horses for something to eat and they foraged in the surrounding area for any nourishment which might help them survive. They did not all succeed in doing so, for if, on the night of the battle, twenty men lay dead, the cruel aftermath saw the number of dead rise to eighty-two.

To this desolate scene came the thrilling news that Diego de Maldonado (who had been sent by the Adelantado to Cuba to procure more provisions) was sailing along the coast, with his ships, close to the province of Achusi, which was not, in fact, far from where their party were encamped. De Soto told his men that they would be leaving for that destination straight away. Indefatigable as ever, he planned to construct the first fortress there, so that they would be able to land provisions more easily, and which would give a more permanent character to their presence in Florida.

This strategy might have saved them. Nevertheless, when he overheard some of his men plotting to return to Cuba or Spain as soon as they reached the ships, De Soto changed his mind. He took the incredible decision to continue the journey into the interior, in the opposite direction. This he did in the full knowledge that he risked a possible mutiny among his soldiers.

On the 14th of November 1540, they left Nauvila and journeyed through various different districts until they reached Chicaca. There they decided to winter. It was not however easy to get to this town which was on the other side of a river; Indians were strategically positioned on the opposite shore, and they would not allow them to cross. But they did finally manage to achieve their objective, if painfully, and once there, they set up camp and stayed until March. They were four months of snow and low temperatures, made all the grimmer by the continuous attacks from the Indians.

Not surprisingly, discontent pervaded the camp, and acrimony seethed beneath the surface. On one occasion, Luis de Moscoso, "Maestre de Campo", was demoted and replaced, accused of negligence for not having stationed enough sentries. In this way, he was made a scapegoat for all the surprise attacks that the Indians had sprung on them.

In May 1541, they came to the Mississippi, which they called the "Río Grande". The sight of this vast river aroused some rather strong emotions amongst these Spaniards, as is evident from the way Fidalgo de Elvas describes the spectacle:

[...] the river was close to half a league wide. If a man were standing still on the other side, you would not be able to make out if it were a man or something else. It was very deep and its waters moved with a very strong current; the water was muddy and turbulent [...] this was because whole trees and branches hurtled beneath the surface, carried on by the force of the current [...] <sup>9</sup>.

The rafts that they were constructing with which to cross the Mississippi were not ready until the 18th of July 1541. When they had finally finished them, they reached the town of Casqui, and because of the welcome the Indians there gave them, they stayed on for a month. It was at this point that they raised the first cross in this part of the Northern Continent. They did so in a ceremony which all the Spaniards reverently attended. The Indians were much astonished by the spectacle and began to join in, aping the Spaniards' holy gestures.

<sup>9</sup> Fidalgo de Elvas, *op. cit.*, chap. XXII, p. 101.



They then moved on, keeping on the same course until they came to the town of Capaha. Because the land was so persistently barren, De Soto sent several groups out in different directions so as to get a bearing as to how the land lay round about. When these reports had come back, they decided to alter course and head in a southerly direction, which they then did on the 29th of July 1541.

All that time ago they had disembarked euphorically in Tampa Bay. Twenty-six months later they were still roaming about aimlessly, striking deeper and deeper into the continent. They were severely fatigued; their reserves were equally depleted. Above all, no-one was now capable of rallying their spirits, for their hopes of ever finding the «treasure» had been finally extinguished, and they had let the pearls go by the wayside.

In this random way, they crossed the towns of Coligua (on the 26th of August 1541), Calpista (on the 7th of September), Palisema, Quixila, Tanico (on the 15th September) and Tula, gathering as much sustenance as they could find on the way. Whenever they heard of their imminent arrival, the Indians invariably seized their belongings and abandoned their dwelling places as soon as they could. They would return when these desperate, hungry Spanish hordes had moved on in search of more abundant pastures.

A new winter was drawing in and it was essential to find a suitable site for a camp which would at least have access to some nourishing crops. They planned to wait there until the spring. They had now been three years on the expedition, they had lost two hundred and fifty men and a hundred and fifty horses, and in all that time they had heard no word, let alone received any help, from Cuba.

The place they eventually selected was Autianque. It was considerably populated, but there was a high yield of maize in the area. The climate however was terrifically severe and the snow fell very deep; so much so, in fact, that it prevented them from leaving the camp for almost a month. It was at this stage that Juan Ortiz died. His state of health had never quite recovered from the gruelling years he had spent in such bleak conditions, and his poor health subsided during the rigours of winter. He was thus never to fulfil his longing to return to Spain.

De Soto's objective was now to return to the Mississippi, where it was possible that help from Cuba or New Spain might somehow reach

them. Above all, they reasoned, if they followed the river, surely they would eventually get to the sea. Once De Soto realized that the province of Anilco was so close to the river, he gave orders to strike camp (this was on the 6th of March 1542), and plotted a southerly course in the direction of Anilco where they arrived on the 29th of March 1542. Whoever had spoken of the fertility of the land in that area had not exaggerated: there were heaps of grain about and fresh water galore from the river Anilco, which, they soon established, flowed into the Mississippi in the province of Guachoya. The Caciques of these two peoples (from Anilco and Guachoya) had been enemies for many generations and had been at war with one another, on and off, for years and years. But they were so equally matched in most respects that neither had been able to win a decisive victory over the other.

When they arrived in Guachoya the Cacique there promised them every kind of assistance in constructing their ships and also offered to provide them with any provisions that they might need but, crucially, on the condition that they join forces with him in his struggle against his eternal rival. For the Indian Cacique, it was a great opportunity to defeat his powerful neighbour once and for all. For De Soto, it presented a last chance to save his expedition. He no longer felt capable of taking such risky, contrary decisions as when he had chosen, months before, not to go to Ochuse. He felt obliged to make a pact with the Cacique, but considered it wise, all the same, not to get personally involved in such matters. He thus proposed that Captain Juan Guzmán take command at the head of this motley party of Spaniards and Indians, while he would bring up the rear, accompanied by the Cacique. So Juan de Guzmán led out some four thousand Indians, and behind, with the Adelantado and the Cacique, went another two thousand plus the rest of the Spaniards<sup>10</sup>. It was clear that the Guachoya had pulled all their possible reserves into line and that they had reckoned on the conflict developing into a mighty onslaught.

This battle between these two peoples provides a fairly clear impression of the sort of brutality that the Indians sometimes indulged in, in their inter-tribal conflicts. It was as if all the ethnic hatred that

<sup>10</sup> El Inca Garcilaso, *op. cit.*, fifth book, chap. V, p. 474.



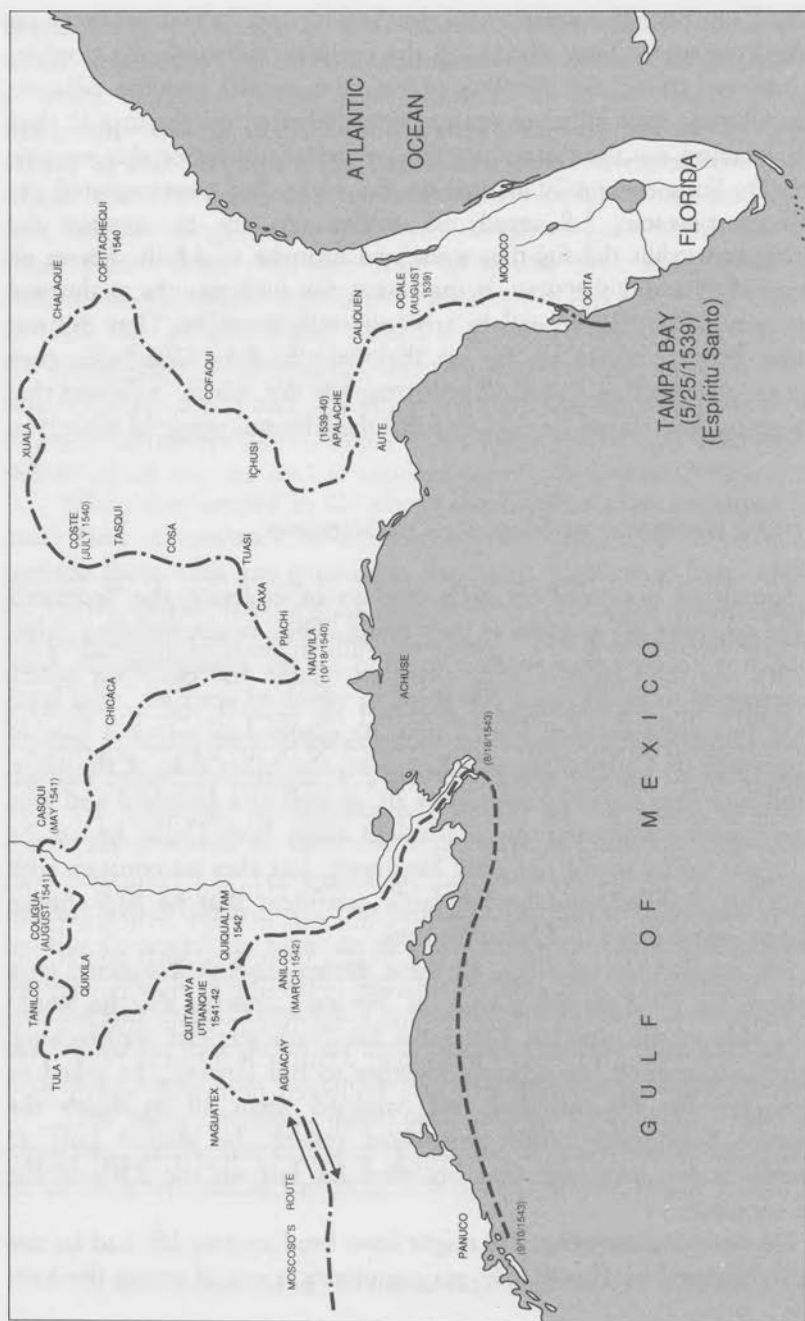
had built up over the years was unleashed in one furious moment on the Anilco people. They plundered the temples, taking all the trophies that adorned them; the dwelling places were sacked and the adjacent lands pillaged; they killed as many of the terrified inhabitants as they could, making no allowances for the weaker members of this society. When De Soto eventually arrived on the scene and contemplated the appalling spectacle, he urged his soldiers to try to contain the Guachoyas so that the fighting would be brought to a halt. Above all he wanted to avoid the town being burnt, for such was the traditional Indian way of putting an end to any large-scale hostility. They did not however manage to do so, for on their way back to Guachoya, they could see the dancing flames illuminating the sky, which indicated that some group had stayed behind to fulfil their brutal, vengeful objective.

#### DEATH OF HERNANDO DE SOTO. LUIS DE MOSCOSO

Somewhat unnerved by such displays of violence, the Spaniards decided to make off as soon as they could. They began building ships, though not because they wanted to wind up the expedition. De Soto now intended to build just a few ships in which to send his most loyal men to procure assistance from Cuba; he planned to set up a base in the province of Quigualtan, which was on the other side of the river. He still had four hundred men after all, as well as a hundred and fifty horses, together with anything that might arrive from Cuba. At last, he felt, he was going to see not only his dream, but also his contract with the Crown, fulfilled, and he felt fairly confident that he had chosen the appropriate place in Quigualtanqui.

But on the 21st of May, all these dreams and deliberations were cut short, for De Soto fell gravely ill. He soon realized that he would not be able to win this last battle, for his death was fast approaching. He thus summoned his officials together to bid farewell; he asked to be forgiven for his mistakes and enjoined them all to finish the adventure honourably. After this short speech, he elected Luis de Moscoso as his successor, and breathed his last on the 27th of the same month.

He was only forty-two. He might have lived an easy life had he not been so obsessed by Florida. His main motivation was of course the hunt



for gold, but it does not seem that this was his sole objective. He gained a reputation for resilience and sound command like none other:

[...] he was extremely patient in his undertakings; in fact his soldiers were greatly moved by the patient suffering of their General [...] He was a successful soldier on many days, though on the crucial day he lost his life [...] Personally, he was extremely brave and he often took part in the fighting during the campaign; he would divert from the obvious route and could overtake ten of his own men in this way. Everyone remembered how ten ordinary lances were not worth as much as his [...] By day, his was always the first or the second shot; by night he was never the second but always the first. He was one of the best shots that the New World had ever known. He also spent more than a hundred thousand ducats on this expedition, a sum of money he had won in the conquest of Peru. He gave his life to this project, and died in harness <sup>11</sup>.

His death brought a profound sense of desolation to the troops. This was not simply because of the obvious grief they felt at the loss of their Adelantado, but because of the sudden sense of defencelessness that his death brought them. It had been De Soto's powerful personality and stamina that had rallied his men during the darkest, most arduous moments which had seemed to be an almost continuous feature of their journey. Their fear and vulnerability occasioned by his loss was born out by the fact that they made an enormous effort to conceal his death from the Indians.

They hid his corpse for three days, and planned to bury it one night in the town. But even then they did not manage to relax, for it seemed to them that the Indians had begun to suspect that something serious had transpired, for they were seen muttering as they passed the place where De Soto had been interred. Such was their anxiety that they decided to dig his body up again and throw it into the river. This they had to do by inserting it into a hollowed holm oak which they then filled with earth so that it would sink more effectively. There at the bottom of the Great River, which is how he had referred to the Mississippi, lies the body of its European discoverer. It was not of

<sup>11</sup> El Inca Garcilaso, *op. cit.*, fifth book, chap. VII, p. 479.

course possible to attend to his last wish in which he had specified his preferred eternal resting place, but were he to have known of this majestic burial ground when he made the will, he would doubtless have approved.

Thereupon Luis de Moscoso took up the command. He needed to weigh the situation carefully. The decision lay between persisting with De Soto's plans or changing course and heading west, in the hope of meeting with some expedition on its way from New Spain to Florida. In the end they chose the latter option; they abandoned the brigantines they had been working on and left Guachoya on the 4th of July 1542 in the direction of Mexico.

They walked fast, partly because they were not entirely sure where they were and they were anxious to come across something that would make them feel more positive. They passed through Chaguatè, Amaye (20th of July), Naguatex, Lacane, Guasco and Naquiscoca. As they wended their way through the southeast, the land became more arid. It was unpopulated and there was therefore no maize. It became clear that it had been an error to have elected this route, so Moscoso made the decision to turn back to the Mississippi again; they would keep to the Adelantado's idea of spending the winter there whilst they constructed new ships.

Three years had now passed since they had begun their voyage; hunger and fatigue had a crippling affect on them, partly because their rations had dwindled, and in this desert region, there seemed not the slightest hope of replacing them. Turning back was the only possible recourse. But there was no let-up to their misery, for on their return they lost their way and simply could not find the places they had passed on the outward journey. Their difficulties thus intensified. Although it seemed rather too bold to return to a place (Anilco) where they had helped to wreak so much havoc, they were completely lost and barely had enough strength to find new paths. They had already committed one serious error in the first decision to leave Guachoya. The fear of making a further mistake, when such a lot was at stake, made it only sensible to make for Anilco. The town was practically abandoned however, for the Indians had not recovered from the savage attack they had helped to perpetrate and they had not even looked after the land.

No-one could now avoid the reality; the change of plan had cost them more than a hundred lives, with no earthly result to show for it. Eventually they found somewhere to winter in a place called Aminoya, next to a great river, which was close to both Guachoya and Anilco. Those months were spent in earnestly constructing brigantines. For that they relied on the invaluable help of the Cacique of Anilco. He had not been allowed to forget the tragedy that had befallen his town those months before, and, fearful that such an outcome would be repeated, put himself out a great deal for the Spaniards, providing them with blankets and provisions and even oil and wood etc.

It seemed as if they were on the last stages of their journey. Once they had finished building the brigantines they would set off without more ado. But the Indians were meanwhile rather taken aback by the re-emergence of these visitors, of whom they thought they had seen the last. Had they returned to mess with their lives yet again? They were determined to avoid such a scenario, but if they were to force the Spaniards to abandon the area, they ran the risk of future invasions. They came to the conclusion that the only way was to finish with them once and for all. They thus assembled an alliance of Caciques through which they agreed to launch a full-scale offensive against the Spaniards before they had finished building their ships.

They managed to shelve their inter-tribal enmities for they were drawn together by their fear of the Spaniards. But the latter were saved from certain death when the Anilco people (who were part of the whole set-up) warned them of the alliance's intentions. Moscoso's emotional words of thanks<sup>12</sup> are hardly surprising;

he said that if God had given him life at some point, he did not repent of having served the King of Castille and his people so well.

So when the Caciques sent emissaries offering favours and friendship to the Spaniards, with the hidden motive of spying on their activities and the state of completion of their boats, Moscoso took the opportunity to give a punishing impression of strength and power (which was in fact quite illusory, taking into account the Spaniards'

<sup>12</sup> P. Mártir de Anglería, *Década*, chap. VII, p. 35.

prevailing weakness). They inflicted such hell-bent punishment, (cutting off all their hands), that the alliance was thrown into disarray, and most of the representatives fled for their lives to their different lands.

On the 29th of June 1543, three hundred and twenty two Spaniards in seven brigantines set off with a captain presiding over each of them. Even this journey was not to be easy. They were too heavily laden and thus sailed slowly, and this made them vulnerable to attacks from Indians who deduced from their weight that they were carrying something of value. It was clear that they needed to lighten their load so Moscoso took the decision to go ashore once again so as to sacrifice the horses and to take advantage of the meat.

On the 18th of July they found they had to decide between two possible strategies: to sail straight across the sea to New Spain, or to get there circuiting the coast. The second option would be longer, given the dimensions of the gulf, and they would also run the permanent risk of being spotted by Indians who mostly lived along the coast. On the other hand, it would be much safer for them; after all their ships were extremely fragile and were not fit to take the buffeting of the fierce winds and storms that were so habitual there. Even when they had sailed in much sturdier ships, they had often been wrecked in those waters. Also if the crossing were to be prolonged, it would be wise to be as close as possible to dry land.

So they opted for shadowing the coast. All the same, as they had foreseen, stormy conditions did in fact manage to disperse the brigantines. But with great effort, and thanks to a favourable wind, they were able to reach land again; they had to stay there for two weeks while they waited for an improvement in the climate. At this time they were only eating what they were able to fish, for the maize they had brought from Florida had already run out; they repaired the ships and stocked up with supplies of fresh water.

Several times they put to sea and found that they had to go ashore again. It was as if the sea did not want them. In the meantime, the men were using up their precious rations. On the 10th of September 1543, two months and twelve days after their first departure in their make-shift brigantines, they reached the mouth of the river Panuco<sup>13</sup>. It was at this point that it was decided that a number of

<sup>13</sup> Panuco, the river in Mexico, which meets the sea in the Gulf of Mexico on the Atlantic side.



captains should set out in different directions to see if they could find traces of their compatriots. These captains were: Antonio de Porras, who went towards twelve o'clock, Alonso Calvete, who headed north and Gonzalo Silvestre, who went inland <sup>14</sup>. All of them returned with fragments of news that the presence of the Spaniards was known about. This of course brought uncontainable joy to their ranks.

But before their voyage had come to an end, when they had begun to feel rather safer, they started laying into Moscoso. They criticized him for having failed to colonize or conquer anything, and for having changed the Adelantado's plans. In spite of the severe hardship that they had undergone in their desperate search for riches, and the vast, barren tracts of lands they had crossed where it had been so inordinately difficult to find even the food necessary for survival, Florida was still an alluring phenomenon. It seemed to contain something which caused people to lament that they had ever left her, even if their experiences there had been horrifying. In fact on the 5th of October of the same year, in the presence of the Viceroy Don Antonio de Mendoza, some of the survivors made it clear that they wished to return on a future expedition.

By the terms of the "Contract", the expedition had failed, but it should be remembered that the party did amass much fascinating information about the interior of the Continent. They were, in addition, the first European group to make real contact with the Indians of this region. It was a fairly extended contact, though their encounters had mostly been bellicose which hardly favoured any mutual understanding.

#### RESULTING DECEPTION

It seemed that Florida, «that poor, hard, insalubrious land which had simply swallowed up those expeditions without their being able to profit in the slightest, for either their God or their King...» <sup>15</sup>, was fated

<sup>14</sup> El Inca Garcilaso, *op. cit.*, sixth book, chap. XIV, p. 564.

<sup>15</sup> G. Keegan, *Experiencia misionera en La Florida, siglos XVI-XVII*, Madrid, 1957.

against the Spaniards. They had invested so much and had gained nothing.

Millanich, commenting on the outcome of this expedition wrote,

they never found any great wealth. If there had been gold in the South-east, the Spaniards would have made a bigger effort to settle, and surely the country would be speaking Spanish today <sup>16</sup>.

I would like to qualify this claim. While it is certain that they were basically searching for gold, it should be remembered that most members of the expedition were not entirely disillusioned by their failure. They did not, for instance, abandon their interest in the place because they did not find any treasure there. A number of the survivors, (the majority of the original party having died in the course of the journey), returned, and they did so for a number of reasons which should be analysed. One of the factors was clearly De Soto's death. Because of his great leadership qualities and powerful personality, his colleagues and troops felt his loss all the more keenly. His death in itself deflated the spirit of the mission to such an extent that it seemed necessary to wind up the whole enterprise there and then, and even to beat as hasty a retreat as possible from Florida. The land had, after all, been unremittingly hostile towards them from the arrival of the very first Spanish party in 1513.

Missionaries also experienced this hostility. De Soto had taken twelve priests with him, in accordance with the terms of the "Capitulación". He was meant to keep them and to provide them with a wage. When they first arrived in the land and found Juan Ortiz so immediately, things could not have seemed more auspicious for these monks. Ortiz, who was familiar with not only some of the Indian languages but, more importantly, with their customs and sensibilities, would be an excellent guide as to the most advantageous way of reaching their souls.

But this advantage was not sufficient for the enormous task that confronted them. In the first year, four of them died. Furthermore the

<sup>16</sup> *New York Times*, 19th August 1987. «They never found anything of great value. If they had been gold in the South East, the Spaniards would have made a greater effort to establish themselves there, and we would, surely, be speaking Spanish today».



Spaniards never stopped for any length of time in any one place, nor did they build any settlements; in this way, they never actually lived amongst the Indians, circumstances which would have allowed the monks to foment friendships and instil trust. Since there was so little regular, daily contact with the Indians, they could not evangelize.

The few occasions when they did stop for some time in any one place were especially uncondusive to evangelizing. Because of the chronic shortage of rations, the Spaniards would surround the Indians in order to gain access to their food stocks. Any warm relationship which might have been established rapidly fizzled into one outright aggression, or even bitter hatred.

The missionaries therefore failed just as the conquistadors had done, and for much the same reasons. Florida was a new, unconquered territory with a scattered population. Both groups, the conquistadors and the missionaries, were always united and therefore ran the same risks. Of the twelve priests who had started out on the expedition, only five returned. They were two secular Fathers, Rodrigo de Gallegos and Francisco del Pozo, two Dominicans, Juan de Gallego and Luis de Soto, and a Franciscan, Juan de Torres<sup>17</sup>.

The missionaries' lack of success on this occasion awoke the general controversy, back in Spain, as to whether the priests should accompany conquistadors, or whether they should go on their own. Since they used peaceful methods, they would surely be better received by the Indians, and their evangelizing mission be more fruitful, were they to go it alone.

<sup>17</sup> M.V. Gannon, *op. cit.*, p. 9.



## V

### FRIAR LUIS DE CÁNCER

#### PEACEFUL CONQUEST

The Dominican, Friar Luis de Cáncer y Barbastro was one of the first monks to journey to the New World. He vigorously defended the notion that America should be conquered peacefully, without recourse to violence. He was of course fully aware of the failure that other Spaniards had met with in Florida, and the enormous risk that his objective entailed.

Though he knew of the intractability of the Indians and how they abhorred the Christians for having waged so a cruel war, he had some particular fascination for Florida <sup>1</sup>.

He therefore sought permission, from both the Crown and from his own religious superiors, to organize an expedition that would be made up of monks only.

After making various such petitions, on the 28th of December 1547, the Viceroy of Mexico, Don Antonio Mendoza, finally gave his permission for this new expedition to Florida. The Crown had no confidence in this project, particularly as previous expeditions had been so infortuitous. Ultimately, however, it had to agree to let it go ahead. A movement sympathising with Friar Luis' views had a certain

<sup>1</sup> A. Dávila Padilla, *Historia de la fundación y discurso de la ciudad de México*, Brussels, 1575, first book, chap. LVI, p. 184.

influence in this respect. Furthermore, the Crown came to recognize that if the missionaries were prepared to use an alternative strategy, it just might guarantee the spiritual conquest; in this way, one of the Crown's central objectives in the New World would be reached.

Everyone understood that it would be a difficult mission. As soon as royal permission had been conceded, a number of people began to voice their opposition to any heroics that might have been the ambition of these friars. However Friar Luis knew the risks he was taking, but he somehow felt sure that he would be able to achieve his goal. He wrote to his spiritual master Friar Bartolome de Las Casas in the following way:

Everyone in Sevilla is impressed by the suggestion. Some, particularly those who are close to God, make many positive remarks; others believe that we are heading for the slaughterhouse. My sins may, of course, prove an obstacle, but there are so many people who have put such a tremendous effort into the project that I believe that Our Lord will know not to be confused by those who talk ill of the whole enterprise...<sup>2</sup>.

The friar had no difficulty in appointing monks to accompany him on this noble mission. Among those he chose were the Dominicans, Gregorio de Beteta, Diego de Tolosa, Juan García and the Brother Fuentes. He also recruited some sailors, the navigator Juan de Arana, and an Indian Christian called Magdalena, to serve as guide and interpreter. All set off from Veracruz (in New Spain) in 1549 aboard the *Santa María de la Encina*.

Friar Luis, who remained convinced that his plan could be carried out successfully, had carefully arranged to avoid any port where Spaniards had previously been. In this way, he believed that they would be able to strike up a different sort of relationship with the people there. The Indians would not therefore harbour bitterness towards the European, and Friar Luis and his men would be able to demonstrate their good intention, and the sense of friendship and peace that gladdened their souls.

<sup>2</sup> Codoinao, tome VII, p. 200. Letter from Friar Luis de Cáncer to Bartolomé de las Casas.

However the monk's intention was frustrated by a number of factors. The winds were unfavourable, and the pilot made an error of judgement in his attempt to plot a course through uncharted waters. In addition, he was said to have been somewhat fearful of approaching the unknown. So on the 29th of May 1549, on the eve of the Ascension of the Virgin, they arrived exactly where Narváez and Hernando de Soto had first landed (the Bay of Tampa).

On the following day, they approached the land in a launch boat in order to ascertain whether the harbour was safe. A number of sailors landed and approached a nearby copse. Suddenly some Indians emerged waving their arms in a decidedly unfriendly fashion, which sent the Spaniards fleeing back to their ship. The monks would still have preferred to have made contact with the Indians there and then, but the rest of the crew disagreed adamantly and insisted on leaving the place immediately.

They continued cruising northwards therefore, in search of a port. On arriving, eight days later, in an area not far from Apalache, Friar Luis and Friar Juan García decided to disembark. Their absolute confidence in their mission and in the good will of the Indians made them rash; apparently they had not the slightest sense of fear. They agreed to head for some mountains and spend the night there. The following day they continued to look for a suitable place where they would be able to anchor the boat safely for a length of time. Meanwhile, the pilot and the rest of the party followed up the coast by sea. They eventually picked up the monks who had been unable to find an appropriate site, and had thus opted to return to the ship.

When Brother Fuentes noticed some huts on the coast, it was decided that Magdalena the guide, Father Diego de Tolosa and a sailor would go in search of people. As a token of friendship, they would offer them gifts which they had brought with them. When they did meet with some Indians, the reception was so warm that Father Cáncer was inspired to join the group himself. The monks were overjoyed at this, and soon almost all settled down to pray together. Meanwhile a crowd of Indians had gathered round them, intrigued perhaps by the gifts. The monks could see that it was curiosity that encouraged the people to draw near, but they also knew that these early encounters were very important for laying the ground for a future mutual

understanding. Any friendly relations they were able to establish then would greatly facilitate their religious objectives later.

But the missionaries' faith contrasted with the timidity of the pilot, Juan de Arana. He mistrusted the Indians and was also very anxious to find a mooring place where the ship would be protected. If she was destroyed, there would be absolutely no means of returning to Spain. He argued so persistently that he managed to persuade Father Cáncer to go with him in search of the Bay of the Espíritu Santo. Friar Diego de Tolosa, Brother Fuentes and Magdalena, who had been with them since Cuba, stayed on land enjoying a tentative but cordial friendship with the Indian people<sup>3</sup>.

After fifteen days of aimless cruising, on the day of Corpus Christi, they returned to the Bay of Espíritu Santo, which was roughly where they had originally landed. They were anxious for news of the companions they had left behind, and were then surprised at not seeing them waiting on the coast. This might have given them some cause for suspicion particularly as the Indians then vaguely suggested that they would go out and look for their friends in a little while; they had insisted that their Spanish colleagues were unlikely to be there anyway, because they had had no idea when the ships would be returning. The fact that their guide now appeared to be among the Indians, dressed and painted as she was in their custom, might have alerted them that all was not quite right, or that the truth had been hidden from them. However, it was not in the nature of these monks to assume that they had been lied to or deceived.

So when the party returned to the boat to get some rest, they were rather calmer than they had been. When they got there however, they found a Spaniard, a soldier, who had been on the expedition that Hernando de Soto had led, was sheltering there. He had been captured by the Indians and had been ten years their prisoner. The joy that this unexpected encounter brought was cut short when Juan Muñoz—as the visitor was called—reported that Friar Diego and Brother Fuentes had been sacrificed by the Indians before his very eyes; the sailor however had simply been captured.

<sup>3</sup> P. Mártir de Anglería, *Libros de las Décadas del Nuevo Mundo*, México, 1945, Década VIII, pp. 412-413.

This news was a severe blow for Friar Luis. Not only was he responsible for the expedition and a friend and companion to the dead monks, but it was as if his theory had begun to founder. He was much confused and stayed very quiet for some days on the boat. He refused to listen to the pilot's warning that they would not be able to resist any Indian attack without arms and with such few numbers. After all, the inhabitants there had demonstrated that they did not have such clear souls as had been supposed. The pilot was therefore deadset on weighing anchor and returning.

Father Cáncer listened to them all, including Juan Muñoz, who was keen to return to New Spain. He did not, however, follow their advice, for their words could not shake his own conviction in his mission. In fact, he was certain that neither weapons nor more people would be necessary for carrying out the task which had brought them to Florida. Since he had no desire to harrass the Indians, the number of weapons at their disposal was of no concern to him.

The 26th of June 1549 was the crucial day. The monk could see that a number of Indian people had gathered by some trees nearby. Bravely, he took it on himself to land and to go up to them. Even the death of his companions had not convinced him of the danger. He reasoned that if they had been killed by the Indians, it must have been because the guide Magdalena had betrayed them once she had been reunited with her people; she must have told them about the evil that the Spaniards were capable of. He would demonstrate how wrong the guide had been and that his intentions were quite different. If, in spite of what they had done to his companions, he showed peace and friendship, surely they would accept him.

So, refusing to listen to the supplications of the rest of the crew, Father Cáncer headed towards the shore, dressed in his clerical costume and carrying a cross in his hand. But as soon as he reached the shore, the Indians surrounded him. Shreiking loudly they beat him until he fell down and died. At the same time, another group started out towards the ship, firing arrows all the while. Grieved and terrified by what they had just witnessed, the rest of the expedition weighed anchor immediately, bound for Mexico.

Once again Florida had defeated the Spaniards. Those who returned did so without having fulfilled a single objective. And again,



the leader of the expedition, in this case the bearer of a message of peace, had lost his life in action. Not a single shot had been fired.

In Spain the news of Friar Luis' killing caused a sensation and made many very angry. It re-opened the controversy about the need for the conversion of the Indians. In 1551, at the Council of the Indies in Valladolid, Las Casas argued vehemently with various judges on the theme. The royal chronicler, Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, who believed that conquest should come before evangelizing argued against him in the following way:

[...] and the preachers should not go; if they go, they will not be allowed in, for they would be treated just as those who were sent without warriors, under the influence of Sr. Obispo, were treated last year (he refers to Bartolomé de Las Casas, whom he implicitly identifies as responsible for these killings). Even if they are not killed, the preaching of a hundred years would be less effective than that achieved in fifteen days once a people has been subjugated; in the latter instance we have the liberty to preach publicly and to convert anyone we please <sup>4</sup>.

Father Las Casas did not agree with this reading of Friar Luis' failure. One of the expedition's chief strategies had not, after all, been followed; they had aimed to get to a spot where white men had never been before. There was no other reason for the violent deaths of these intrepid monks who went to Florida. He therefore responded to Ginés de Sepúlveda thus:

[...] because of the unjust wars that the Spaniards had previously brought about, the Indians were, rightly and justly, very upset and aggressive. The first person to return to appease what had happened was the blessed Friar Luis who they killed [...] But until the day of judgement, they will be waging a just war against Spain and against all Christians even [...] <sup>5</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> Friar Bartolomé de las Casas, *Tratados*, Valladolid, 1551, third Tratado, tenth objeción, p. 327.

<sup>5</sup> Friar Bartolomé de las Casas, *op. cit.*, twelfth reply, pp. 451-452.

This debate continues to some extent. In Spain in the xvth century, however, in a society where the union of the Church and the State was absolute, all present unanimously voted for Sepúlveda's view. At all events, the latest expedition had demonstrated that individual sacrifices were absurd and that they should not be allowed to happen.

On the 15th of June 1558, the regional Father of the Company of Jesus asked the king «[...] not to give authority to all the projects which were presented as specifically religious [...]»<sup>6</sup>. He concluded that civil and religious sectors should, at least, go together in the future.

<sup>6</sup> G.J. Keegan, *op. cit.*, vol. VII.



## VI

### TRISTÁN DE LUNA Y ARELLANO

#### A NEW FRONT

The experiences of the different voyages to Florida had indicated that, almost certainly, there were no precious metals to be found there. Similarly, it seemed that the territory was practically impassable, and that there were large, uninhabited tracts of uncultivated land. When they were inhabited, the Indians were generally hostile to the presence of strangers. The motive for the launching of a new initiative would therefore be rather different to those of previous expeditions that had set out for the northern part of the continent.

It was now confirmed that the French were present on the east coast of Florida. The Spanish objective came, therefore, to be to set up a series of strategic forts to prevent the French establishing themselves there permanently or even expanding. These security enclaves would be in Ochuse (Pensacola), Cosa (Alabama) and Santa Elena (Southern Carolina). The French had established themselves in the latter area and for that reason, the Spaniards were particularly busy there. This time therefore, the aim was not actually to conquer, but to establish a fort and to defend the area permanently.

It was not only the aim that was different. The means employed, the kind of people on the expedition, the choice of Governor, as well as the port of departure, would all be different.

For the first time whole families took part as members of the expedition. The idea was not so much to conquer but to populate; land would be distributed, on which these families were expected to start up a new life. Many of the men who came aboard did not bear

weapons; they were simply farmers. Some monks were also appointed, though this was done with great care, for this time it was anticipated that they would be able to start converting the Indians. Five Fathers and a Brother, all of them Dominicans, came. Their names were Pedro de Feria (the elder), Domingo de la Anunciación, Domingo de Salazar, Juan de Mazuelas, Diego de Santo Domingo and Brother Bartolomé Mateos <sup>1</sup>.

Traditionally, the choice of the captain was made by the King, though the interested person would have handed in his petition beforehand. The Crown then had to consider whether the candidate would be able to put up with the conditions. After appointing the appropriate person they would have to agree mutually on a "Capitulación" or an "Asiento". This would set out the finest details of both the obligations and rights therein.

Because of the urgency of breaking the French advance, they decided, unusually rapidly, that the expedition should not set out from Spain as had been the case until then, but from New Spain. It was obviously closer and the organization would therefore be simpler and more economic. All that was now needed was to find the right person to lead the project. Don Tristán de Luna y Arellano (1510-1573), who was very well connected in Mexico and whom the Viceroy knew well, was eventually chosen. De Luna had been to New Spain in 1530 with Hernán Cortés. After a brief period in Spain, he returned again in 1535, this time as "Maestre de Campo" with his cousin, the Viceroy Antonio de Mendoza. Some time later he would take part on Francisco Vázquez Coronado's expedition (along the Mississippi) and in 1548, he successfully put down the uprising of the Tequipan Indians against the Spaniards in Oaxaca (Mexico).

In many ways he resembled his predecessor, Hernando de Soto. Both had voyaged to the New World in the company of the great conquistadors, Pizarro and Cortés. Also, both were second sons of noble families who, after returning from victorious campaigns, used their prestige to marry upper class ladies, which placed them in the highest social milieu. In 1545, Tristán de Luna had married Doña

<sup>1</sup> M. Gannon, *op. cit.*

Isabel de Rojas, widow of another conquistador, Don Francisco Maldonado.

On the other hand, Tristán de Luna did not have the character, the drive or the physical qualities that Hernando de Soto had possessed. He was a man of little initiative and poor judgement when forced to take rapid decisions. His was a fragile personality and, more seriously, profoundly depressive.

He had other qualities, but he was certainly not the ideal leader. That the choice was bad was soon evident (furthermore he had not even asked to go). The crew did not automatically obey his orders; they would argue with his decisions and rebel readily. They even called him a madman to justify their insolent behaviour. Though De Luna was profoundly religious and undoubtedly extremely good, (as the Viceroy himself described him in his reports to the Crown) evidently this was not enough.

The Viceroy of Mexico had been the inspiration for this new voyage. At a meeting with the Bishop of Cuba, he asked the Crown's permission to go ahead with it. Once it had been given, they began the preparations without actually having the "Capitulación". However, Philip II was kept well informed about the preparations and the course of the voyage by the Viceroy and De Luna himself.

It was the most ambitious expedition in terms of the number of people and provisions. It relied on De Luna's own personal fortune as well as that of some friends. He examined each detail scrupulously, taking almost two years to prepare for it. A permanent settlement had to be made in Florida.

On the 1st of November 1558, in the most important church in Mexico, the Viceroy Don Luis de Velasco handed the Royal Standard to Don Tristán de Luna. This gave him with supreme authority as well as the licence to act as the King's representative wherever he happened to land. On the 11th of June 1559, after De Luna had read these concessions, this large expedition with one thousand, five hundred people (500 soldiers, 1,000 colonists and servants) taking part, the thirteen ships and four hundred and fifty horses, set off from the port of Veracruz. Among those aboard were women, children, missionaries and infantry captains.

Their first goal was Pensacola, on the coast of the Gulf of Mexico. However they were unable to find this location and, after a

week of heavy winds, they were blown across the mouth of the Mississippi, and finally ended up (on the 14th of August, 1559) at the Bay of Mobile, which they called the Bay of Santa María Filipina. Luna arranged for the horses to disembark, and a crew party then headed for Ochuse (in Pensacola) overland. Meanwhile, the flotilla continued by sea.

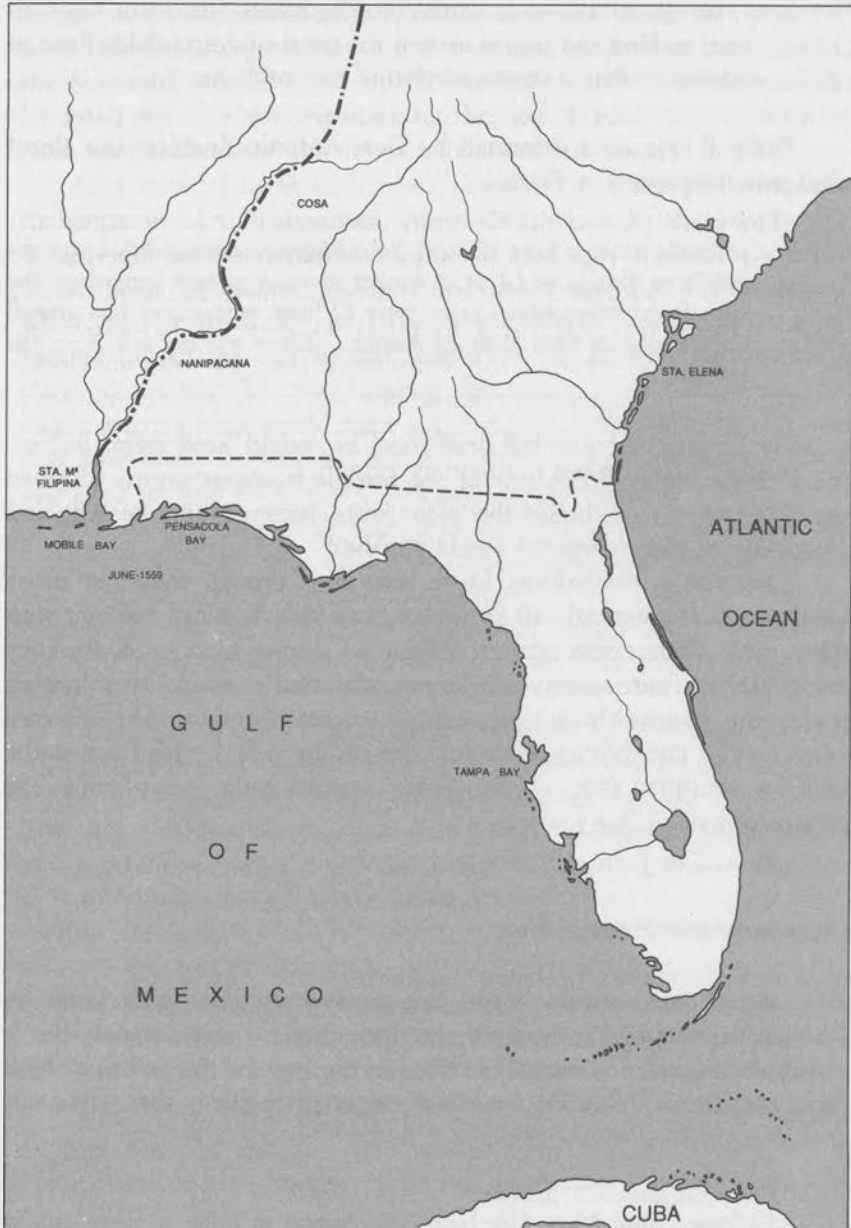
The place pleased the Governor so much that he described it as the best harbour that had been so far discovered in America. The climate was good and the Indians did not seem to be aggressive. For these reasons, it was decided to pitch up there. It has often been heatedly disputed whether this constituted the first town in Florida<sup>2</sup> even though, in reality, the construction was never more than a simple camp, without laws, municipalities or representative authorities etc. At all events, it had only a momentary existence.

Once they had disembarked, two parties were dispatched to inspect the area. One, led by Don Alonso de Castilla, searched the bay. The other, headed by Mateo Sanz and Don Cristóbal de Luna y Arellano (a nephew of the Governor), set off inland. A whole galleon also left in the direction of Mexico. The second expedition was supposed to find the city of Nanipacana (at the top of a hill), which belonged to the Mobile Indians. According to reports of some survivors of De Soto's expedition who had wintered there twenty years previously (1539-1540), it was not apparently very rich, but did however have a certain quantity of grain available. They also sent a galleon to San Juan de Ulúa to send word of their uneventful arrival and also to obtain more supplies. Though they were not strictly necessary for the time being, they could easily lack them in the future.

It was rapidly apparent that the general attitude of this expedition was rather different. Father Feria, for instance, complained to the Governor about the forcible seizing of an Indian to act as an interpreter, almost as soon as they had disembarked. De Luna shared his feelings; so before his men began a series of abuses that he was not prepared to tolerate, he thought it best to write to the King:

<sup>2</sup> H.I. Priestley, *Tristán de Luna. Conquistador of the Old South*, Philadelphia, 1980, p. 105: «Here was built the first town».





Map of Tristán de Luna's journey

... we should reserve some land for the Indians...they can pay their taxes in kind and not in extra work...we should not oblige them to work more than a certain number of reasonable hours...<sup>3</sup>.

Philip II was soon informed by Don Antonio de Mendoza about what was happening in Florida:

...On the 11th of June 1559, as Your Majesty commanded, I sent the flotilla to Florida and I await further news. A galleon arrived on the 9th of september which came from Ochuse, where they had arrived on the day of Our Lady in August... There was no risk from the Indians...<sup>4</sup>.

De Luna could not tell how soon he would need help. But on the 19th of August 1559, one of the terrible hurrican storms whipped up. For twenty-four hours the ships were battered and beaten, and practically all the provisions inside perished.

Fortunately, the human losses were few, though they lost many goods. In fact, practically all the belongings that they had brought with them sank. They could not even hope to receive help soon, for they knew that the rain season had begun, and that it would therefore be practically impossible to get reinforcements through. The Viceroy examined all possibilities, even that of sending help by land across the Gulf, a solution that, at the time, seemed vain, considering the dimensions of such a journey<sup>5</sup>.

#### CONFUSION AND HOPELESSNESS

Soon news came from the expedition that had gone to Nanipacana, urging them all to join them there. It was not rich, but it was doubtless safer to wait there than in the bay for the arrival of help from the Viceroy. But De Luna did not want to move camp. He was

<sup>3</sup> Codoinao, tome XIII, p. 280.

<sup>4</sup> Codoinao, tome IV, p. 136. Letter from México to Philip II, dated 24th of September 1559.

<sup>5</sup> H.I. Priestley, *op. cit.*,

deeply disappointed by the way things were going. He was physically weak and had also received word that as soon as the weather improved, the following March or April, the Viceroy would be sending all that he asked for. For these reasons he thought it wiser not to move too far from the coast.

In a state of some indecision, the Governor kept on postponing the departure for Nanipacana. Meanwhile, none of the supply ships turned up, so the situation became increasingly strained. De Luna's health and depression worsened; he could see that his expedition, which had inspired so much hope in Mexico and Spain, was not turning out in the way he had hoped. It was for this reason that he clang to the bay. He was hanging desperately to the hope that help might arrive which would then allow him to start again on a mission that had hardly begun. But his men saw the state of desperation he had sunk to, and even began to think about deserting.

Those in Nanipacana waited in vain for the arrival of De Luna and his men. They were unable to comprehend the delay. When they saw that the supply of grain was about to come to an end, they decided to set off for Cosa. Apart from knowing that grain was available there, it was also one of the places that they had agreed to get to.

The road to Cosa, which they covered in 45 days, was gruesome. The inhabitants of the first villages that they came to, Apalache and Caxiti, had abandoned their dwelling places, taking their food reserves with them. To the misfortune of the hungry group of explorers, bad harvests had encouraged the Indians to leave and abandon the lands to ruin. Hunger made them desperate:

On the road, an overwhelming hunger made the Spaniards chew their leather belts and the leather buckles on their shields; many died either of starvation or from the poisonous vegetation that they ate...<sup>6</sup>.

Meanwhile De Luna had finally decided to leave a reserve guard of fifty men in the bay of Ochuse. With the rest he set off for Nanipacana, where another great disappointment awaited him. The

<sup>6</sup> J.A. Marban, *op. cit.*

Indians did not even have enough food for their own subsistence and the other party, as we have already seen, had been obliged to set off to look for richer lands.

The first group which had been in Nanipacana arrived in Cosa in June 1560. There they found a letter from the Governor, which had been brought by an Indian friend. The letter informed them that De Luna and his men had left Ochuse and it described the suffering were now experiencing in Nanipacana, for they could not find any grain there. They were now instructed to return to meet the Governor and his party back in Nanipacana.

#### THE RETURN

They were so bewildered by this that it was even believed that the instructions must have been false and that it had been written by some member of the group who was keen to return. It did of course indicate an absurd level of disorganization; the orders and counter-orders brought total confusion. However, as they had abandoned Nanipacana without permission, they feared the consequences of not obeying orders. So once again, they set off on the arduous road back to Nanipacana.

Before setting off, they approached the inhabitants of the village, who were at war with their neighbours, the Napochies. In exchange for food, the people from Cosa asked for their assistance in their fighting against their neighbours. The same thing had happened before. De Soto had partaken of the conflict between the Anilco and Guachoya for instance, and it was often to happen again on later expeditions. To some extent it shows that the Indians perceived the Europeans to be stronger, even on this occasion when they were hungry and exhausted.

Relations within the group had become tense. They were divided into three groups; one was in the bay, another was stationed in Santa Cruz de Nanipacana (as the Spaniards had renamed the village) under the command of Tristán de Luna; the third was led by Captain Sanz who was on his return from Cosa. It should also be underlined that this expedition, whose ranks were mainly filled by farmers, women or children, was not able to put up with the extreme conditions that previous expeditions had had to undergo:

The weakness of the expedition consisted in that two thirds of the members were not soldiers. The majority were farmers and women and children.<sup>7</sup>

They had left Mexico not so as to conquer but to settle peacefully. Fortune had not smiled on them however.

The journey from Cosa to Nanipacana was almost impossible. They were ill, barefooted and defenceless, and they did not even dare to approach the villages. On the 1st of August 1560, they wrote to De Luna in Nanipacana to ask him to meet them half way, so that their hardship might be reduced. The letter was entrusted to another of De Luna's nephews, Cristóbal Ramírez y Arellano. Realizing the gravity of the situation, he covered the distance in ten days, which was extremely rapidly. De Luna, by contrast, was not a man to take decisions. He was generally content to procrastinate and his men, as a result, never knew what to expect.

When De Luna's nephew arrived in Nanipacana he found, to his great dismay, that the others had abandoned it (they had done so on the 22nd of June) and headed for the bay, without bothering to wait for their companions. He had found a note in a tree explaining this departure. They were now also ordered to come to the bay without delay. Before leaving, the Governor had been persuaded to allow the women and children and the sick, to abandon the expedition and to try to reach New Spain by land. He put another nephew of his, Don Luis de Zúñiga, in charge of this group<sup>8</sup>.

Meanwhile, in the bay, there was no news of the men from Cosa, no help had arrived and dejection was setting in. It was clear that De Luna was always taking his decisions when it was too late. To recapitulate: after umpteen delays, he had finally opted to leave for Nanipacana. When he arrived there however, his men had had to leave to look for better land; they then summoned Captain Sanz's group from Cosa to meet in Nanipacana, but they had not bothered to wait either. When his nephew turned up, they had already gone to the bay leaving orders for all to meet there. Feeling anxious again about his

<sup>7</sup> Ch. Tebeau, *A history of Florida*, 1971, Coral Gables, p. 23.

<sup>8</sup> H.I. Priestley, *op. cit.*

men, he now proposed that they all go to Cosa, where they were more likely to survive.

He was now completely discredited. Under the pretext that the Governor had lost some of his mental faculties owing to his extreme suffering, the troops refused to obey him. They tried to convince him that it would be infinitely more advisable to stay where they were and wait for the supply ships that the Viceroy might send.

Not long after some cargo ships appeared on the horizon, some of which had unfortunately sunk in a great storm. When the ships drew into the coast, the high hopes of those on the shore were dashed, for the Viceroy had been so convinced that they would have found enough to eat in Nanipacana that he sent only minimal supplies of food and vast stocks of boots and clothes, etc.

Everyone was now pressuring De Luna to retire. He repeatedly rejected the idea however, particularly when he had confirmation of the French presence in Santa Elena. He wanted to fulfil this goal at least. It was Philip II's specific wish and he therefore made a final effort to send some ships.

Everyone was reluctant to follow his orders and they all pressed Cerón to take up command. The latter had, after all, showed that he was readily disloyal. When the viceroy was informed of this grave situation on the 2nd of October 1560, he thought that the best thing would be to make De Luna return. He was not prepared to tolerate lack of authority. De Luna now asked to be go to Santa Elena before returning, but he was not given permission. Even his friend, Don Luis de Velasco, thought he was in no condition to undertake any further projects in Florida. He therefore finally agreed and limited himself to dispatching a small expedition led by Martín Doz. He was also prevented from getting to Santa Elena however, because of the storms.

Meanwhile, in November 1560, after a year spent inland, the men in Cosa had returned, and all were reunited in the bay of Ochuse, where they had disembarked with their hopes soaring. Their main strategy had consisted in populating, cultivating and evangelizing in at least three places: in Ochuse, Cosa and Santa Elena. A year later they were hungry, ill, disillusioned and profoundly disappointed.

## DE LUNA'S DISMISSAL. THE CROWN'S MEASURES

With each passing day, De Luna's position weakened. It came to the point that he was obliged to ask the Viceroy to send some outside authority (or "Oidor") so that his troops' behaviour could be denounced officially.

By the beginning of 1561 the Viceroy had decided to make sure that De Luna left Florida. He could see that he might have to oblige him to leave as well as to find a replacement. The orders arrived on the 1st of April 1561 with Captain Ángel de Villafañe and Father Gregorio de Beteta (a survivor of Friar Luis' expedition) who also brought supplies of food. De Luna's position was so pitiful that his removal from office was carried out with the greatest tact. They did not wish to humiliate him in any way. He was, after all, a good man who had given all he had: his personal and political prestige, as well as all his fortune and imagination. However, the mission had overwhelmed him at the very first setback.

On the 9th of April 1561 Villafañe made a ship available for De Luna and gave him orders to leave. The new leader then arranged for a small group to be stationed in the bay and in a last, desperate effort, made his own personal attempt to reach Santa Elena. Not even he, however, was able to succeed for the storms blew up again. So as soon as was able to pick up the men he had left on the shore, he returned to Havana.

Quite apart from the main political objective of this voyage, that of settling in Florida so as to defend the area from the French, the evangelical mission had not even been embarked on. Though they were delayed for long periods in fixed spots (in Nanipacana and Ochuse for instance)-and that had not happened on previous occasions-they had very little contact with Indian people. There was no violent confrontation because the people had mainly abandoned the area; this also meant that there was no communication between them.

But given the reigning peace, one would have thought that the monks might have made some tentative steps in this direction. They did not do so however. They were constantly engaged in attending to the troops or the Governor and the conflicts between them. They failed to undertake any missionary work, but doubtless they carried out



an important task in tempering the high spirits and mediating between the Spaniards in a tense and hopeless atmosphere.

There were some monks in each of the three groups into which the expedition had been divided, including the one that returned to Mexico. While waiting in the bay they managed to keep religious activities going on a daily basis. Nevertheless, the Indians of the area continued to be ignorant of Christianity.

Manuel Serrano Sanz, referring to Florida and the luck which the Spanish had met there, once remarked that it was as if

history, whose laws seem sometimes to be guided by fate, had moved the columns of Hercules, with its legend, there<sup>9</sup>.

A dream had been shattered. This was true not only for the Viceroy and for De Luna, but also for Spain. The Crown became concerned at the number of disasters that its subjects had suffered in Florida. It therefore promulgated a Royal Decree on the 23rd of September, by which it came to be «prohibited to go to those cursed lands».

This was the general feeling after the failed missions. However Florida was to become more than just a land to discover, conquer or populate. The Bahama Straits were situated on its coasts and they constituted an extremely important strategic zone, for Spanish flotilla, returning to Spain from Mexico and the Caribbean laden with precious metals were often assaulted by the increasing numbers of French, English and Dutch privateers. The presence of these «intruders» obliged Spain to prohibit its ships from being navigated without an escort (1661). They also needed to reinforce their presence in that area. That task would be entrusted to Pedro Menéndez de Avilés.

<sup>9</sup> Prologue by M. Serrano Sanz in *Relación de los naufragios y comentarios de Alvar Cabeza de Vaca*, Madrid, 1906, tome I, p. 6.

## PART II

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# THE INDIGENOUS WORLD OF XVIth CENTURY FLORIDA



# I

## THE IMMENSITY OF FLORIDA; ITS FIRST INHABITANTS

I remember those steep mountains as if it were yesterday, those everlasting spring seasons, those serene rivers, seas and hills, and the beautiful trees that seemed always to be bedecked with yellow flowers.

Ocampo

The vast stretch of land which came to be known as Florida in the xvth century included all that lay between the Labrador and Mexico, as well as the peninsula which bears its name today. The lack of delineating frontiers and the ever-changing terrain, which clearly confused many of the period's geographers, make it very difficult to examine the indigenous culture overall. The Spaniards considered Florida's territory to be all that Herrera described:

The Province of Florida, close to the «Audiencia» of La Española, comprises all that is between the river of Las Palmas, which reaches Panuco and draws the frontier with New Spain. Seventy-three degrees northwards is its northern frontier. The coast has been extensively explored from the river of Las Palmas up to Santa Elena, which is some six hundred leagues in distance...<sup>1</sup>.

Acosta y Solórzano go further:

<sup>1</sup> A. Herrera, *Historia general de los hechos de los castellanos en las islas de tierra firme*, Buenos Aires, 1944-1945, vol. II.

The borders to Florida are not known because its territory runs so much to the North and to the West that its limits are simply not certified <sup>2</sup>.

In geographic texts, they even talk of various different Floridas, the Spanish, the French and the English, without actually being able to agree where each ends and another begins. Today it can be said that Florida in the xvth century consisted of the present states of Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, part of Louisiana, part of Texas and the South of Carolina. When the Spaniards, led by Juan Ponce de León, got there in 1513, they did not realise that it was a whole continent, or rather a peninsula to a continent. They even described it as the «island of Florida». For them it was just another island in the Caribbean.

An exhaustive analysis about the human and physical makeup of Florida might lead to the detailed description of the hundreds of different societies and cultures that could be found in the vast region that stretched from the Mississippi to the Atlantic coast. The great diversity means, however, that it is important, and indeed interesting, to look at the common roots and to underline the differences only when they are particularly outstanding.

But it is also important to give an impression of the great diversity of small tribes who so disconcerted the Spanish explorers. But the fact that the Indians used to refer to the name of the village, the tribe or the cacique with the same word complicates the identifying process further.

It is thought that about three hundred and fifty different languages were spoken in the area. This came to be a problem for the Spaniards who had no fixed settlement until 1565. They therefore had no time to learn to communicate properly with the Indian people. In many of the towns that they visited, they therefore captured some Indians to serve as guides. They referred to them as «tongues», and the latter would accompany the Spanish hordes, and put them in touch with the people of neighbouring provinces. The Spaniards were, after all, always

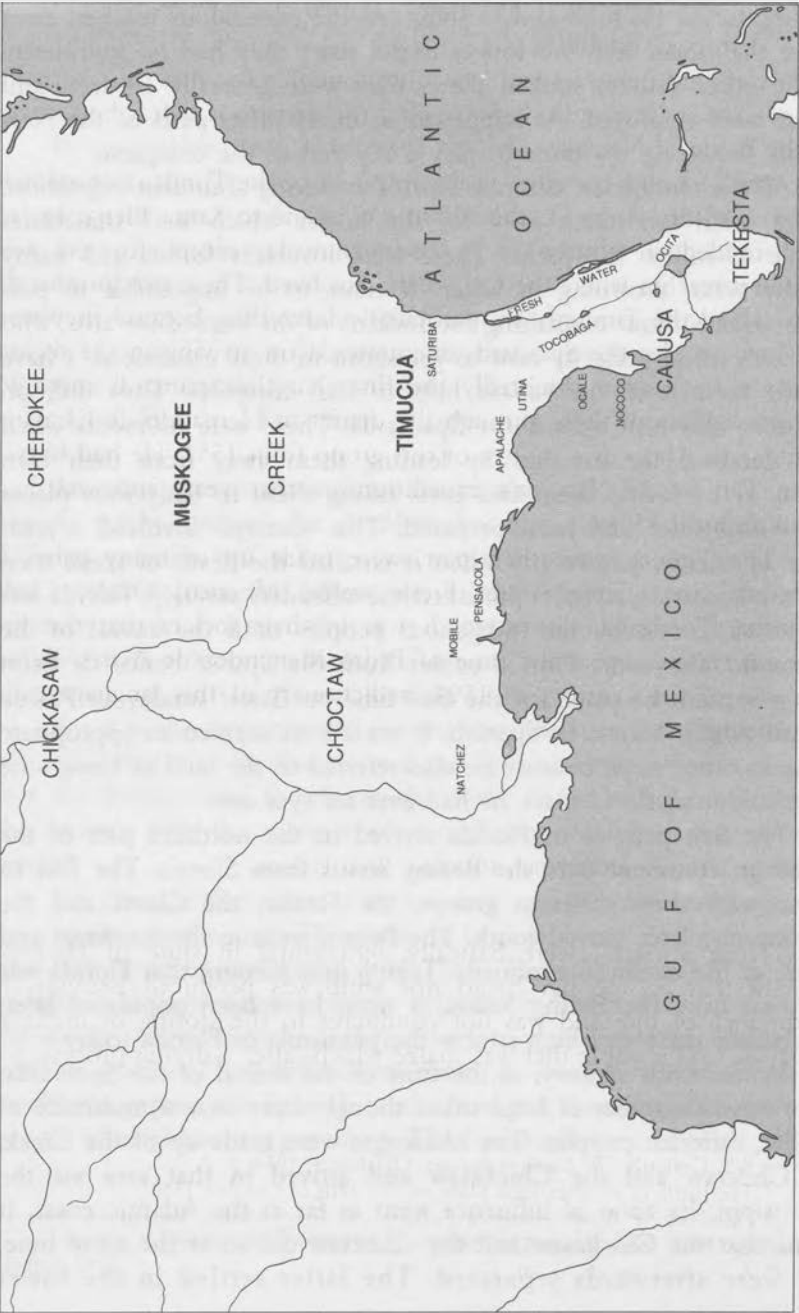
<sup>2</sup> Acosta y Solórzano, *Documentos de La Florida y la Luisiana. Siglos xvi al xviii*, Madrid, 1912.

needing to ask for food and clothing. As the expeditions reached areas where the guides were no longer useful since they had no knowledge of the other dialects spoken there, they were generally set free, and others were employed. As happened in many other parts of the New World, the «tongues» came to play a key part in the conquest.

All the chroniclers describe Florida as having abundant vegetation. It was often too much even for the horses which were sometimes unable to follow the paths. There were luxuriant forests and many marshy areas, drowning in water. It came to be impossible to pass those areas without consulting the Indians of the immediate area, who obviously knew perfectly how to get about in these conditions. I have already mentioned the valiant help of the «tongues». They did, on occasion, also turn against the Spaniards. There were moments when they deceived the invaders by leading them away from their own towns, or by losing them and even taking them to dangerous places where ambushes had been prepared. This «betrayal» involved a great waste of energy, particularly when it entailed the death of some men and the Spanish governors punished the offenders severely. Florida was known as *Cautio* by the indigenous peoples until the arrival of the Spaniards. The name Florida comes from the lips of Ponce de León who glimpsed the place for the first time on Easter Sunday or Pascua Florida as it is known in Spanish. It must have seemed an appropriate name in other ways, because he also referred to the land as being «the most colourful, florid place he had ever set eyes on».

The first peoples in Florida arrived in the northern part of the American continent over the Bering Straits from Siberia. The first to do so were three different groups, the Sandia, the Clovis and the Folson, who later moved south. The Folson went to the southeast and centre of the northern continent. Taking into account that Florida was fairly far from the Bering Straits, it must have been populated later, particularly the area which is now the peninsula of Florida today.

In the xvth century, at the time of the arrival of the Spaniards, there were a number of large tribes though there were a multitude of smaller, different peoples. The Muskogee were made up of the Creek, the Choctaw and the Chickasaw and arrived in that area via the Mississippi. Its zone of influence went as far as the Atlantic coast. It seems that the Chickasaw and the Choctaw did so at the same time, and were afterwards separated. The latter settled in the lower



Location of indigenons groups



Mississippi<sup>3</sup>, while the Chickasaw, a much smaller group and much more dispersed, established themselves higher up the Mississippi. They both came into contact with the Europeans for the first time with the expedition of Hernando de Soto, after the disastrous defeat he suffered at the battle of Nauvila<sup>4</sup>.

The second large group was composed of the Timucua or «señor», whose territory swept up the Atlantic coastline to Santa Elena. In fact they resided in almost the entire peninsula, except for the very southern reaches where the Calusa Indians lived. These two groups, the Calusa and the Timucua are particularly interesting because they were the first peoples the Spaniards encountered on arriving in the region. The Calusa were undoubtedly the first that the Spaniards met. We know more about them through the diaries of Hernando de Escalante Fontaneda, who was a captive of this group from 1551. He had strayed from Pánfilo de Narváez's expedition in that year, and was held prisoner until 1566.

The Timucua, for their part, were made up of many tribes of differing sizes. These were: Fresh water, Mococo, Ocale, Ocita, Saturiba, Tocogaba, Utina etc. It was in their society that the first mission was set up at the time of Pedro Menéndez de Avilés. Before the end of the century, in 1594, a dictionary of this language came into being<sup>5</sup>.

#### WAY OF LIFE: AGRICULTURE, HUNTING AND FISHING

These societies were basically agricultural in spite of Herrera's remark that «... neither bread nor wine was produced because the luxuriance of the land was not conducive to the storing or maturing process»<sup>6</sup>. The staple diet was maize which, after a drying process, was

<sup>3</sup> R.S. Cotterill, *The Southern Indians*, Oklahoma, 1954, p. 7.

<sup>4</sup> The battle of Nauvila took place on the 18th of October 1540.

<sup>5</sup> *Handbook of North American Indians, North of Mexico*, Bureau of American Ethnology, 1968, tome II, pp. 752-753.

<sup>6</sup> A. Herrera, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

stored in special barns called «barbacoas»<sup>7</sup> where it was then ground and used. These barbacoas were usually installed next to the house of the cacique or head of the tribe in a shady place, in order to avoid the damaging influence of the heat and the sun. It was not only grain that was kept here. There was also meat, fish and other sources of food. They enjoyed at least two harvests a year, one in March and the other in June, even though it should be emphasised that they did not reap very much from either. When they had finished eating the produce harvested in June, they tended to move away from the area until March. Grain was the Spaniard's basic food substance in their journeys through Florida, together with the biscuits which they brought from Spain. This was perishable however, and always in short supply. They did of course try to find other food sources, but they were never able to move far from the maize route; had they found nothing they knew they would have been condemned to hunger and starvation.

It was a rudimentary sort of agriculture. It combined all sorts of different activities from the collection of raisins, fruit, palm marrow, beans, pumpkins, vegetables, dried fruit and sunflowers. In addition they grew tobacco which they used to smoke, as is evinced by the startled observation of one of the chroniclers: «all over the area people used to get drunk on smoke, and they would give a lot for it»<sup>8</sup>. Though the Spaniards suffered from hunger in Florida, it does not seem that it was poor land. In fact it offered a variety of agricultural products, and there was much meat and fish available. But, that they never made permanent settlements which might have allowed the different parties to cultivate the land, and that they did not know the areas they were moving in properly, acted against them. The winter surprised them in uncongenial areas, and hunger thus set in. Thus the desolation that was so often depicted by the chroniclers of the expeditions. It did not however correspond to the real Florida.

The fields were sowed by the women. It was a tribal agriculture, in the sense that property was communal. The lands next to the small

<sup>7</sup> In other areas of the American continent, the word «barbacoa» meant an oven made from mud. They would light a fire within and, when it was hot, would take it out and put the meat in, wrapped or covered with sand, so that it could keep hot longer.

<sup>8</sup> R. Levene, «Los aborígenes de América del Norte y América Central», in *Historia de América*, Buenos Aires, 1940, tome I, pp. 249-253.

towns were cultivated by everyone, by men as well as women, even though the latter had the more arduous task. They rarely came away with excess supplies and in any case, they never sold nor exchanged the produce. When it came to the distribution of grain, it seems that there never were any conflicts between members of the same tribe. On the contrary in fact, a great solidarity seemed to reign, and everyone enjoyed a roughly similar economic status, with the exception of the Cacique and the doctors.

The agricultural system that they relied on obliged them to live like semi-nomads. They lived in this way not only when they had taken the produce from the fields and were therefore forced to go out and look for other land. It seems that they were also guided by the seasons. They generally either moved inland for hunting purposes, or towards the coast so as to fish. Few could avoid moving. It was for this reason that Florida had no stable population until late on. They sowed and walked in search of food; then, when they returned, they reaped the produce from the earth and stayed in the village until supplies had been exhausted once again. This was the period when the most important social activities would take place. There were feasts, games, rites, etc. It was the only time when they were able to stay in their homes, and when they were therefore all together. In addition, it was the moment when they had abundant supplies of food though this was only temporary of course.

In their hunting activities, they would trace the paths of certain wild animals which also tended to move according to the seasons, searching for warmer climates. Cabeza de Vaca described the phenomenon in this way:

Sometimes they would have to carry water and wood with them in their search for wild deer. This was because the deer would often reside in areas where there were no such facilities...<sup>9</sup>

As can be seen, it was a labour that they must have been forced to through hunger.

<sup>9</sup> R. Ferrando, *Viajes y viajeros, viajes por Norteamérica*, Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, «Naufragios», chap. 37.

However, even though the majority of peoples were forced to lead a kind of nomadic life, they did so to differing extents. The Indians residing in the peninsula had the sea surrounding them and therefore had less of a need to go trekking after the hunt as was the case with those who lived further inland. The climate gave them no motive for doing so; it was warm in summer and fresh in the winter. It never reached temperatures of extreme cold.

This kind of unstable life was reflected in the sort of dwelling place that they used to build. They did not look as if they would last long. The houses of the Timucua were irregularly laid out in the village. They were round, with a single door; the roof was low and no windows were added. All were constructed behind a circle of stakes nailed in the ground. There was only one gate to the village. Next to the main gate, there were two wooden huts covered in branches, with many gaps in the wall through which one could observe exactly what was happening outside from within. They could not be seen from the outside and therefore ran no risk. This kind of protection meant that there was a permanent possibility of attacks and frequent conflicts between neighbouring villages.

The houses were made of wood or mud and were covered with leaves and branches. The Cacique's house was the largest and it generally had balconies and windows; it was situated in the centre of the village. The barbacoas storing the grain were adjacent to the Cacique's quarters. Grain was the currency or tribute by means of which dependent tribes paid others.

In the north there was a different kind of house owing to the harshness of the climate there. The summer houses were much the same, but they built houses out of clay for the winter. When a fire was lit within they would warm up like an oven. Another kind of house was made of rushes and bored through with wooden stakes. These could be moved from place to place, and were therefore widely used on the hunt, or when they had to go in search of other varieties of food.

The most outstanding aspect as far as the traces of the peoples of Florida are concerned however, were the *mounds*, which were found all over the region between the Atlantic to the Mississippi, including on the peninsula. These were artificial mounds of earth, on which the people would build their living quarters. It is thought that these were

erected either in self defense, or against the flooding that occurred so regularly. These humps were heaped by hand and then trodden down so as to be flat on top. Here they built the ordinary houses and the Cacique's headquarters. Sometimes the latter were installed on a second *mound*, close to the first, which was for the exclusive use of the chief and his family <sup>10</sup>.

Access to these small hills was via some vertical steps, some four metres long, the criss-crossing wooden planks being encrusted into the soil like stairs. The rest of the hill was cut off to avoid it being mounted from another angle, so that the unit was the more secure. Sometimes wooden fences would be put up around the *mounds* <sup>11</sup>.

Their shape varied enormously, but mostly they were circular. Sometimes they were longer, and in these cases, they looked like walls; they would be six to twelve metres thick and about one metre high. Others were in the shape of a low quadrangular pyramid that resembled a terrace. On occasion there were depictions of animals, whose symbolism are unknown but frequent. This was particularly the case amongst peoples dwelling near rivers <sup>12</sup>.

The Creek tribe in the north set up their towns by riversides or on small islands. Their living quarters were few and rather spread out; their numbers were, in short, scarce. As they were a highly mobile society, they used to use a kind of bench which served two needs; they were both beds and seats and were arranged around the fire in the middle of the abode. For the Indians, a house was more than just a home; it was a refuge against the inclement weather and a place to sleep in. Life happened outside. Even the cooking and eating took place in the open air <sup>13</sup>.

The villages were generally small; sometimes they were composed of no more than fifteen to twenty houses. The settlements were quite far apart from one another too; sometimes this was as much as a distance of several days journeying, which made communication or commercial relations difficult. For this reason there were, as I have

<sup>10</sup> El Inca Garcilaso, *La Florida del Inca*, Madrid, 1988, book V, chap. IV, p. 469.

<sup>11</sup> R. Levene (ed.), *Historia de América: Los aborígenes de América del Norte*, Buenos Aires, 1940, tomo I.

<sup>12</sup> R. Levene, *op. cit.*, see the piece by Cyrus Thomas *The Bureau of Ethnology*, 1894.

<sup>13</sup> R.S. Cotterill, *op. cit.*, pp. 8-10.

already said, a large number of different dialects. However, in spite of this, the chroniclers all agree that there was a certain similarity in the structure of these villages. And even with the lack of contact between them, when a foreign element appeared (as the Spaniards were), they rapidly alerted one another by means of a string of bonfires which were lit from village to village. In this way, all the indigenous peoples were warned of any impending danger.

Other important activities making up the Indian economies included hunting and fishing. This was because agriculture could not guarantee supplies of food for the whole year. They had no livestock and so the meat, that was so important a part in their diet, came exclusively from hunting. Birds, which were frequently consumed, were shot from trees with great finesse. They also made use of the feathers of the bird. Hunting was more common amongst the Indians in the north, where there was little grain available, and where they were far away from the sea. In the south they were always able to rely on fishing.

The most commonly hunted animal was the deer, many of whose attributes were made use of apart from its flesh for meat: hides, overcoats, blankets, mocasins, bones for working the field as well as adornments for the hair, or bracelets and even leather balls which were played with in moments of leisure. The horns were boiled in order to make glue mixed with colour, they were used for painting skin. The intestines were useful for making cord, but above all it was used for the strings on the bows, which was the main Indian weapon in war. They even cut off the head which they employed while hunting; they would place it on top of their own for camouflage amid the undergrowth. In that way they were able to get close to the herd without their noticing the trick. However this was not the most widely used hunting formula, for they rarely came up close to the animal; they preferred to use traps, some of which were highly ingenious, such as this one which Ocampo describes:

They prepare one of their strongest and most flexible lances which they place in an arch between the trees, strapping it up with string and leaving a loose rope hanging. Then they seek out a small animal like a bunny rabbit or a bird to serve as the bait. As the wild animal goes to pick up the little animal, he makes the arch shake; the latter



has a heavy rock placed in it which then falls on the animal and knocks him out. The Indian then jumps out and kills the beast <sup>14</sup>.

They also used to hunt bison which was a source of many of the same goods. Women used to like the hide to tie up their hair with and to make bracelets and other ornaments. They also shot rabbits, snakes and birds, the duck and the dove as well as the peacock which they greatly admired for its beautiful feathers.

In Florida there were many different kinds of animals. Among the wild ones there were panthers, bears, wild cats, goats, hare, rabbits, beavers, otters, foxes and a great variety of birds: doves, turtledoves, ravens, sparrowhawks, herons, cranes, ducks etc <sup>15</sup>. There were thousands of insects, above all mosquitos, which were the bugbear of the Spanish explorers. The Indians used to fight against them by burning a particular wood which they only used for that end.

Hunting was a necessary means of obtaining food for the Indian. It was never a sport or a trading activity. They were not trying to procure excess supplies; they merely wanted to reassure themselves when the grain stocks were running low. It was only later that the Indians changed their prey for the products that the European man had brought with him <sup>16</sup>. It was an activity which was always performed by the men of the society, and in groups. The women and the men who did not know how to hunt stayed in the towns to watch over the fields, to weave baskets or to prepare the fire for the meat that the hunters would be bringing. The men who did not hunt were poorly considered by the rest of the group. They were thought to be rather womanly and were often the object of mean jokes.

Another basic staple food in the Indian diet in Florida was fish. This was particularly the case with the Timucua indians who resided on the peninsula and on the coast as far as Santa Elena. They were expert fishermen; they fished all kinds of fish, from turtles, snails, tuna, seal, shell fish and whales, all in great quantities. The trout, according

<sup>14</sup> J. Ocampo. *La Gran Florida*, s.a., Madrid, p. 120.

<sup>15</sup> R. William, *An Account of the first discovery and Natural History of Florida*, Gainesville, 1976, pp. 4-5.

<sup>16</sup> R.S. Cotterill, *op. cit.*, p.11.



to Hernando de Escalante, were «as large as a man»<sup>17</sup>; that is of course an exaggeration, but they must have been of a considerable size all the same.

They also ate cockles, mussels, crabs, sole, snails and oysters etc. The bones of some fish were used as fish hooks, darts, small spears and needles. Otherwise, they might be painted and used as jewellery. The sea was the Indian's natural environment. All that he extracted from it, or from the river was useful. Nothing was strange, even the roots on the coast on the sides of the rivers which were they pulled out to make bread with.

It is not exactly known how they fished but one would suppose they would have used the fish hooks made from fish bone. They may even have done so by hand, for they were excellent swimmers. Ocampo provides an example of this, though one cannot be sure that it was widespread, for there is no other reference to it:

... for fishing, they made use of a bitter plant which sent the fishes wild. They crush the leaves of the «Manu», they pull it out, ruffling the water with it while the fish begin to jump like drunkards, and fall back on their backs in the water. That is when they fish them...<sup>18</sup>.

Around the Mississippi, they made use of the salt of the river that was deposited on the sand. It would, however, be inevitably mixed up with the sand when they collected it; so to separate it, they used special baskets that they attached to a tree with a vessel beneath. They poured water over it which dripped into the vessel; they filtered it and put it to boil, diminishing the quantity of water little by little until only sand was left at the bottom of the pan<sup>19</sup>.

The fish of this area was obviously rather different to that found on the coast. Fidalgo de Elvas described it in this way:

There was a fish which the Indians called Bagres; its head occupied a third of its body; on either side of the gullet and in the gills, it had

<sup>17</sup> «Memoria de las cosas y costas de La Florida e indios de La Florida que ninguno de cuantos la han costado han sabido declarar», in Codoínoa, tome V, p. 534.

<sup>18</sup> A. Ocampo, *op. cit.*, pp. 121-122.

<sup>19</sup> El Inca Garcilaso, *op. cit.*, book IV, p. 445.

huge spikes. There were others similar to the Barbos and another like the Chopa with a head like an idiot. Another was known as the Pala; it had a snout of a long rod pointing upwards like a spade. There was a fish the size of a pig which was known as a Pereó, and it had teeth...<sup>20</sup>.

This latter description is surprising because it comes from an author who is not generally given to exaggeration, though such excesses are often found in the pages of other chroniclers; it must have referred to an example which doubtless would impress the Spanish reader.

The Indian peoples seemed to be absolutely fearless of the sea; they were so at ease with it that they even captured whales. Hernando de Escalante described, in his diary, the spectacular way in which whales were captured. They formed part of his usual diet practically.

They would close in on them in small canoes, and hurl a sharp pole which would fit into one of their apertures (the nose). The Indian then hits it repeatedly with another pole, encouraging it to drown. The whale convulses half maddened. The Indian waits until he calms down and when he does so, he nails another pole into the other cavity, leaving the animal unable to breathe. He then returns to his canoe and waits for the whale to die. Once it is captured, it is cut up into small pieces<sup>21</sup>.

The fish was then laid out in front of the sun to dry on a kind of wooden grid, and finally roasted or cooked, which is what happened after a hunt too. They were never eaten raw. If some was left over, it would be conserved in salt or even in adobe.

They had small dogs which they did not hunt. On occasion, the Spaniards would feed on them when hunger constrained them, but the Indians never tried it. They had never set eyes on the horse. This has often been written about, and particular attention has been drawn to the fact that, at the beginning, this animal inspired great fear amongst the Indians. They had believed that the rider was joined to the beast

<sup>20</sup> Fidalgo de Elvas, *op. cit.*, chap. XXIV, p. 106.

<sup>21</sup> J. Jackson, *Early Florida through Spanish eyes*, Hispanic American Studies, Florida, 1954, p. 65.

in a single body. Dávila says it all in these few words: «... the sight of a single horse brought more fear to the Indians, and indeed was more likely to provoke them into battle, than the hands of two men...»<sup>22</sup>.

PHYSIQUE: «HOW WELL PRESENTED THEY ARE!»

The Indians were generally naked; only the women covered themselves with fleece from the trees, a kind of plant growing thread that looked like linseed. This was usually coloured beforehand. However the style of dressing depended to a large extent on the region and the season. If the temperature allowed it, they went completely, or partially, naked. When the cold reappeared, they made skirts and breeches out of the hides. With the rigours of winter, they would cover their shoulders with another skin like a tunic; in addition they had mocasins — sewn together with deer intestine — on their feet. Swanton suggested the precise way in which leather was worked in the Indian world:

They painted them, they cut them with sharp stones and they put them out to dry. Then they plunged them in water for several days and put them to dry again in order to get rid of the smell. Having done this, they boiled the skin in water with deer brain so as to soften it. The following day, they made a hole in the ground, lit a fire and piled on some maize cobs. They would hang the hide over this, with the outer surface facing downwards. They would stay like this until the smoke was yellow. After this, they added red oak wood and cooked it in water for a certain time. They then left it to cool for a day, and later to dry<sup>23</sup>.

Hair was usually worn long. The women had theirs loose on their shoulders and the men tied theirs up with a piece of string in the centre of their heads, leaving a fringe at the front. At feasts and other special occasions, they decorated their persons with feathers and bones.

<sup>22</sup> A. Dávila Padilla, *op. cit.*, chap. LXIII, book I, p. 206.

<sup>23</sup> J. Swanton, *The Indians of the Southeastern United States*, Bureau of American Ethnology, Washington, 1946, Bulletin 137, p. 445.

This gave them an appearance which apparently pleased the Spaniards, for in all their descriptions, they refer to the clean, tidy look of the Indians. They used different headresses of coloured feathers and they painted their bodies in different ways according to the occasion: burials, wars, feasts etc. By interweaving animal hair they made bracelets or ankle rings; these were complemented by having balls hanging at their feet. When they danced they sounded like maracas accompanying the rhythm of the dance with their tapping. The chroniclers were much impressed by a fabric made from plants and palm leaves which the women would create. They would weave these pieces together with great ingenuity to make rugs. This was a particular activity on the peninsula.

Sea produce, which was so important a part of their nutrition, was also used as jewellery. Shells were used as necklaces and bracelets, as well as snails and pips, and of course pearls, whenever they could find them. These were however used decoratively; they had no special value.

The Spaniards also thought the Indians very beautiful physically; they had graceful stature. It should be added that owing to their way of life and minimal supplies of food, their bodies were shapely and fine. Apart from the climate and the nutrition which doubtless contributed to their good form, the Indians also gave much importance to their physique. From an early age they were made to engage in physical exercise and war games.

Physical attributes played an important social role in the tribe. It has been observed that in some tribes the cacique and his family were always the tallest. Indeed they wanted to continue to be so at all costs so that the position of power should not cease to be occupied by their family. It was for this reason that all the new members of the family were given special nutrition. They were also subjected to other sorts of treatment that was thought to accelerate and increase the growth process:

While the children were still in the cradle and being looked after by the midwives, the specialists got into action. For several days the specialists would smear the limbs of the child with cooked herbs, which were said to soften the bones; then they would pull on the bones which lengthened, for by that time they were as soft as wax. Then the midwives covered them with blankets and put them to the

breast; they enriched the milk with other special food. Every few days they would repeat this operation<sup>24</sup>.

The Indians were generally taller than the average European. However in the case of the cacique and his family, they were «exaggeratedly tall». Herrera referred to the son of the Cacique of Tascalusa in this way: «he was eighteen years old and so tall that no Spaniard came up to his chest»<sup>25</sup>.

They looked after their skin with plant juices or oil for it had to be exposed to all weathers. It was a coppery olive colour, probably because it was permanently exposed to the sun. There is no evidence that they did anything special such as piercing their bodies, except for the inhabitants of the island of Malhado (next to the peninsula), where the men would pierce their chests with hollow canes; sometimes they did the same to their upper lips.

#### SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

Among the peoples of Florida in the xvth century, there were no laws even though no-one really broke with tradition, «... to be without customs or traditions would be like death»<sup>26</sup>. The supreme authority, that was vested in the cacique, made sure that this was so. He, or indeed the «cacica» (for women could also fill this role) paraded at the top level, though they never exercised their rule in an absolute or a dictatorial manner. They frequently consulted with the elders of the tribe; several days a year they would meet in the public square and they even asked advice from them. Only when there was a doubt about something, or on declaring war on another tribe, was their authority made manifest, and in this case irrevocable. They tried to maintain the customs of their tribe, all of which were ancestral. They were aware that this was what their people expected of them. If they did not do so or did not try to do so, they would be much discredited and a reversal of their usual customs might even put an end to their rule.

<sup>24</sup> J. Jackson, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

<sup>25</sup> A. Herrera, *op. cit.*, 1920, book II, chap. I, Década VII, tome 6-7, p. 25.

<sup>26</sup> A. Ocampo, *op. cit.*, chap. XX, p. 125.

From the beginning, the Spaniards tried to gain the cacique's friendship with presents and concessions. They were not, however, always able to do so. Bad relations with the Indians was a constant theme of the Spanish experience there. If there was not outright war, there was ongoing enmity entailing the loss of many lives and the hopes of many conquistadors. It was only Pedro Menéndez de Avilés who was able eventually to establish a real friendship with these peoples that was based on respect. This is revealing for Menéndez had to face a new reality in the conquest of the new continent: the presence of the French. The latter had set themselves up in Florida and had already nurtured some all-important friendships there.

It should be underlined that while many of these caciques had managed to get neighbouring tribes to submit to them, thus earning some tribute, there was no general chief in the region. This fact goes some way to explain the fragility of the Spanish presence in Florida. It was only after they had befriended one of the caciques that they were able to collaborate with some tribes; they had to go from cacique to cacique while seeking to colonize this vast territory where the indigenous people were almost always hostile to foreign visitors.

In the peninsula, the cacique's power was hereditary; in other areas however, the position was elected according to physical qualities perhaps, or proven prowess in battle. However, as I have already said, the responsibility usually fell to a member of the family. All obeyed him; the elders of the tribe also enjoyed a certain authority. The sense of respect was profound amongst the Indians. The members of each tribe paid their leader a tribute in kind which was almost always in grain. The cacique also received tribute from neighbouring tribes that were subordinated to him. However, he never made his power and wealth overly ostentatious, except for some specific adornment he might wear as well as a rather larger house than those of his people.

There were no intermediary powers nor different social classes though the doctors and sorcerers commanded much prestige; also older people would enjoy a certain moral authority. The doctors and the priests or sorcerers were mostly the same person who performed both important functions: they blessed the arrows before they set off for war, they prayed for rain, they predicted the future and, of course, cured the ill with herbs which they always carried on their person. Their curing techniques consisted in inducing vomiting with smoke, and if



they needed to open up the body, they would cut the skin with sharp shells, collecting the blood which was shed. If the sick person was young, suckling mothers would drink the blood so as to enrich their milk to give strength to their little ones <sup>27</sup>.

#### SOME ASPECTS OF SOCIAL LIFE

All members of the tribe worked in the fields. Indeed the woman had the harder task for she was obliged to coordinate this labour with preparing the home. Her companion did not assist in the latter activity, and she was also obliged to look after the children, for a considerable period of time too because of the scarcity of food.

In spite of this, women had a high social status, and they played an important part in the feasts and entertainments. They came and went when they wanted and, in general, were fairly free. However, adultery by women was severely punished, and they were also repudiated by the entire community for all of their lives. They would be obliged to paint their faces in a certain way so that they could be distinguished from others. The Inca Garcilaso told of such an incidence in two important tribes, the Cosa and the Tascalusa. Among the Cosa, adultery was judged in public by special judges; the rest of the community would hurl abuse at the offenders between beatings, once the husband had stripped his wife and cut her hair. The verdict was always the same: they were either banished from the community or made to live in the house of their relations, never to come out or show their face again. The Tascalusa were even tougher; the guilty would be tied to a tree by her husband so that the tribe could whip her until she died <sup>28</sup>. But the Indians were very scrupulous when inflicting their punishments. They studied the situation carefully, beforehand consulting several witnesses. They had to be absolutely certain that the crime had been committed before pronouncing a sentence over it, so as not to hurry or to make a forced error.

<sup>27</sup> Ch. Lowery Woodbury, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 64.

<sup>28</sup> El Inca Garcilaso, *op. cit.*, pp. 397-400.



The women were only able to have one husband. The men, on the other hand, had the right to take several wives, though only the first wife and her children were considered legitimate. At all events, the first wife had to give her consent to her husband taking other wives. She always gave her blessing because apart from it being badly thought of to do otherwise, it was seen as entirely normal. In addition the arrangement had some advantages for her: as soon as the new wife arrived in the household, she came to form part of her domestic service; her own chores were thus significantly reduced<sup>29</sup>. However, polygamy was not that widespread, except among caciques. The family was a stable and protected entity. Young people married early, and as adultery was so severely punished, one might claim that it was a «conservative» society. Lastly, although it was a fairly marginal phenomenon, homosexuality was entirely tolerated within the society.

Their religion was dominated by their worship of the sun. They used to sacrifice animals in ceremonies; the doctors, in their capacity as high priests, would preside over these occasions. The fact that they had no permanent high priest, and that the ceremonies and cults were rather rare, may indicate that theirs was not a particularly religious society. Nevertheless, traditions were firmly rooted in their life-style. The missionaries were to remark on this fact. The Indians absorbed their teaching rapidly, but when this meant that they were obliged to change their ancestral customs, they were intransigently opposed to its introduction. It meant that any theory or effort on the part of the missionaries to convert them were fruitless. The majority of the few conversions that took place in Florida at this time were impelled by a fear of the implications of not obeying. It was often the case that as soon as the Spaniards moved on, the converted returned to their ancient beliefs.

Hernando de Escalante's observations of the Chiroka Indians (in Cabo de Santa Elena) are rather interesting in this respect.

They believed their souls to be immortal; hell, or the place of sorrows, was generally situated in cold latitudes, and here the bad would go to purge themselves. Paradise was in areas where the weather

<sup>29</sup> J. Swanton, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

was clement, and God gave much to those who visited his land. They would dance, sing and enjoy themselves...<sup>30</sup>.

The missionaries were notably unsuccessful in Florida in the xvth century. Neither their efforts at indoctrinating, nor their attempts to generate a certain respect for themselves, and for what they represented, seemed to work. Pedro Menéndez had to place a reserve guard in each mission for their own defence. These poor results made them resort to emphasising rather unsubtle aspects of the Christian religion so as to be in a stronger position: fear in the face of God, for instance, who, they insisted, would punish them at any moment. They also chose to emphasise the miracle, to which it seems the Indians were highly sensitive. But what they did not achieve through hours and hours of striving to teach, they did by assuring them that it would not rain while God was angry with them. The day that it rained after they had made Christians of a few caciques was, certainly, the day that they converted the greatest number.

In general, they did not erect large monuments to the dead. Individual members of the tribe were often buried beneath the ground of their own houses, or otherwise in small collective ditches. The sorrow that death brought with it was externalised in great ceremonies of grief and particular rites that were enacted. Such suffering was even greater in the case of the death of a small child. The Indians of Florida adored their children and were devastated by their early deaths. The Timucua

[...] blackened their faces and cried for a year, during which the parents and the relations would not wash... They buried their dead, and only rarely did they burn them, singing and dancing while they burned. They made dust of the bones, and kept the ashes; after a year had passed these would be drunk by the relations and the women of the tribe<sup>31</sup>.

These customs were common in almost all tribes when a child or a warrior died. However, in some tribes it was frequent to sacrifice a

<sup>30</sup> A. Herrera, *op. cit.*, Década II, book X, tomes 1-2, pp. 260-261.

<sup>31</sup> F. López de Gomara, *op. cit.*, tome I, p. 75.

child as a symbol of grief at the death of the cacique. If the person in question was old, it was generally considered a natural phenomenon and they behaved very normally, in spite of the respect generally paid to the old.

The burial of the cacique was vested with a different treatment: it was a solemn occasion at which everyone wept. They placed all their favourite objects in the tomb with him: their favourite drinks, their arrows, their most treasured personal belongings. This goes to show that they believed in another life in which they wanted to be able to enjoy all these things. Friends, as a sign of mourning, would cut their hair and remained mute for about six months. In Tocobaga, close to Tampa Bay where the Timucua lived, when the Cacique died, they cut him up into pieces and cooked him for two days. When the meat separated from the bones, the skeleton was taken out and they processed it towards a temple<sup>32</sup>. Among the Calusa Indians (to the south of the peninsula), if the son of the cacique died, everyone sacrificed one of their children to accompany the body. When a cacique died, all his servants were buried with him<sup>33</sup>. They made a sepulchre with all his wealth and personal belongings, and they placed the trophies which the cacique had won in his battles against his enemies in the door of the small temple where he was buried. These trophies were usually skulls nailed onto lances.

Spanish chroniclers do not appear to bear witness to the incidence of human sacrifice. Woodbury, however, picking up on one of Le Moyne's references, claims that the Timucua used to offer their first child to the Cacique. According to him, sacrifices were taking place on the altar. Until that moment, the victim lay in the lap of its mother, with his face in her hands. A friend would offer the child to the chief, after which the woman would begin to dance in a circle around it, demonstrating her joy. A group of six Indian woman would perform this sacrificial ritual<sup>34</sup>.

When a young Timucua woman married the cacique of the tribe, she was led towards him on a small wooden throne, on the shoulders

<sup>32</sup> J. Swanton, *The Early History of the Creek Indians and their neighbours*, Bureau of American Ethnology, Washington, 1922, Bulletin 73, p. 374.

<sup>33</sup> J. Swanton, *ibidem*, p. 389.

<sup>34</sup> Ch. Lowery Woodbury, *op. cit.*, vol II, p. 68.

of some men. Her hair was loose and she was adorned with necklaces, bracelets and bands on her arms, her ankles and her knees. Those who accompanied her carried large fans made of duck feather that were interlaced with foliage. Those in front of the cortège made music with hollowed cane flutes which announced their arrival, while a group of young people, highly decorated, carried baskets with fruit for the ceremony.

According to Cabeza de Vaca's descriptions, the Indians «did not tend to sleep with their wives once they knew that they were with child, until several months after birth»<sup>35</sup>. The Cheek women, after the birth of their babes, lived alone for a certain length of time in a separate house. They gave birth alone, for this act was thought to be very intimate and personal to the woman. Ocampo tells how:

[...] when an Indian woman was seven years old, her parents already leave off being responsible for her and for looking after her. They then look for a husband among the young boys. The men stayed with their family until the latter gave them freedom. The Indian received several women, and as they are girls of seven years old, he has to look after them, and does not sleep with them until they are of the age to be mothers. It is then that the husband becomes a father<sup>36</sup>.

#### WAR AS A WAY OF LIFE

These people were warriors who frequently fought with their neighbours, and of course, with any invaders<sup>37</sup>. All the chroniclers attest to the hostility that the Indians showed to the Spanish expeditions. It is enough to remember that the majority of the Adelantados and their men died in their attempt to conquer. Because they were so used to war perhaps, the Indians were well prepared for war. They would hide themselves in undergrowth and then suddenly

<sup>35</sup> A. Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, *op. cit.*, chap. XXIV, p. 43.

<sup>36</sup> A. Ocampo, *op. cit.*, p. 116. This social sphere is where Indian behaviour seems to have been most diverse, but we do not know which tribe Ocampo is referring to in this quotation. The author does not specify which, and the title of his chapter is simply «Barbarian customs».

<sup>37</sup> J. Jackson, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

appear in a different place. They knew the area like the backs of their hands, be it land or water. The rivers and the sea gave them some advantage over the European explorers for they were very nimble in moving about in them; indeed these became their principal refuge. They would swim like fishes, even when heavily laden, and even the women would do so with their babes in one arm, while they made strokes with the other. It was as if the current did not affect them. On the other hand, many of the Spaniards did not even know how to swim.

Though very brave, they never fought when they found themselves in too weak a position. If they could see that they would not be able to take on another army, they would not show themselves up. They abandoned the town and set off, after having burnt all their goods so that they should not fall into the hands of the enemy. They would never surrender. When they could see that they were going to be unable to defeat an enemy, they used any kind of strategy or trickery to surprise the opposing side. This is the reason for there being so many references to the Indians as «false, betraying and extremely cruel in their encounters with the Spaniards, which is the same as with other tribes»<sup>38</sup>.

Much has been written about the severity of the Florida Indians when it came to fighting. This has often been used to justify the burning of villages, surprise assaults and pillaging which the Spaniards carried out, for it was the only way in which they were able to make inroads into the territory. Even with methods such as these, they were still unable to establish themselves there. The chroniclers agree about this side of the Indian character. Nothing or very little could be done «because they could not defeat the Indian who, to my way of thinking, was the bravest in the whole of the New World»<sup>39</sup>.

Their war-like nature is not only evident in their bitter resistance to the invader, but also in the continuous wars that went on between them. The design of their towns was clearly calculated to afford greater protection, even before the arrival of the first expeditions. They made war between one another, until one or other of the caciques emerged

<sup>38</sup> A. Ocampo, *op. cit.*, chap. I, p. 19.

<sup>39</sup> A. Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, *op. cit.*, chap. XXV, p. 44.

as the master of a particular number of tribes who then obeyed him and paid him tribute. If important caciques did not take part in the conflict, the confrontation was reduced to small neighbourly disputes, which occurred frequently on the allegation that someone had stolen some food perhaps. In this case the winner limited himself to taking a few slaves and then withdrew, satisfied that he had shown himself to be superior. These prisoners were later exchanged because, in spite of the fact that the side one practically always won sometimes, during small surprise skirmishes, members of the winning tribe were also captured. By exchanging captives, all gained their liberty again. The possibility of being surprised at any moment meant that they were highly mistrustful; they therefore generally went around in a group, armed with weapons.

These battles between the small tribes had their own rules which were always respected: they were not able to go into the fields of the defeated. That is to say, when the combat came to an end, either side retired to their own village without the other knowing about the loss of their territory or, as Cabeza de Vaca emphasised, «when they have been wounded and used up their ammunition, everyone goes their own way without anyone following the other, even though some are many and others are few, and this is a custom of theirs»<sup>40</sup>. The serious conflict or war emerged when two important caciques were involved; in this case, from the moment when they began to prepare themselves, they knew that it was going to be pretty serious. All the men of the tribe met with the cacique. They drank a potion which would allow them to go for twenty-four hours without eating or drinking; they painted their bodies in different colours according to the traditions of each tribe, though red and black predominated; they adorned their hair with feathers. Once this was done they sorted out what they were to take with them. Once approved by the tribe, the cacique declared the war to be open.

Sometimes tribes made further precautions. In case their village was to be destroyed, they would lead the women and children to a nearby mountain, and install themselves in hidden trenches that they had previously dug next to their houses. During the night they would

<sup>40</sup> A. Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, *op. cit.*, chap. XXIV, p. 43.



light the fires inside the houses so that the enemy might think that the families were within. When they approached to attack, they would be surprised and captured by those hidden beneath <sup>41</sup>. If they had to go out, they never walked in a straight line, but swayed from side to side so as to be a harder target for their enemies.

They often destroyed and burnt their villages in order to defeat the enemy once and for all. On occasion, the desire for revenge on a particular rival was so great for a cacique that he sought the help of the Spaniards. When Hernando de Soto arrived in Guachoya, the cacique of that area, the enemy of the nearby Anilco, came to hear that the latter had been distinctly inhospitable to the Spaniards, that they had tricked them in fact. He thus thought that the visitors must feel a touch resentful and he «did not want to miss the opportunity that he had to avenge his enemies [...]» <sup>42</sup>. He therefore convinced the Adelantado to accompany him to the land of his enemy. On this occasion, the Spaniards were able to witness how brutal the battles were between the Indians:

They sacked and robbed the temple [...] They did not want to take anyone, of any sex or age, alive. They killed them all, the old and the babes-in-arms alike [...] They stripped the old of all the clothing they had and killed them by stabbing them [...] They took the children by the legs and hurled them aloft and into the air; before they reached the ground, they would be made to land on a spear [...] <sup>43</sup>.

Not all the Adelantados gave into these requests for help by the caciques. Pedro Menéndez accepted no such thing, alleging that if he took sides between them, his King would order him to be killed. This was said however in order not to offend them. It was a different policy to that followed by his predecessors, and it was to convert him into the most prestigious of all who trod the land of Florida.

During these important wars, a large number of captives were taken. Some of them were killed so that their heads would be used as

<sup>41</sup> El Inca Garcilaso, *op. cit.*, chap. V, p. 473.

<sup>42</sup> El Inca Garcilaso, *op. cit.*, chap. VI, book 5, p. 45.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibidem*.



trophies and the rest were kept as hostages who they might, one day, be able to exchange. Swanton shows how the Timucua were not afraid to gather the hairy hide of the women and children; on the contrary, it showed one had more valour if one went as far as enemy territory to do so<sup>44</sup>. If the captives were many and the hairy hides too numerous, the cacique would distribute them amongst his neighbours to put at the doors to their houses.

Cotterill however, claimed that before coming into contact with the Europeans, the Indians did not wage war. Nor would they have had reason to do so:

[...] There were few occasions when there was conflict between the tribes, though there was a lot of hunting and many hunters. There were no economic conflicts as there were no economies; there was no struggle for power, as there was no need for it. The food reserves were low, and so rarely did they engage in war which would have meant moving from the fields. Extracting the hairy hide was, after all, a difficult business before the white man arrived with his blade [...] <sup>45</sup>.

But most of those who have written about Florida, or who described what they saw there at the time, attest to the fact that there were wars between the caciques, and that they were continuous. It is, of course, also true to say, as Cotterill does, that these could not go on for that long, for they needed to return to their houses. As these contests were between neighbours, they were doubtless brief and not on the European scale by any means. Their objectives were not necessarily economic; simply to know that one was the strongest, the most feared and the most respected in the area, quite apart from earning the tribute, were reason enough.

The basic weapon was the bow, which was of a substantial size. The Indians were very adept in manoeuvring it. This weapon proved a nightmare for the Spaniards, who lamely watched as their companions fell by their side with four or five arrows in their body; they were only able to load their harquebuses once in the same space of time.

<sup>44</sup> J. Swanton, *op. cit.*, p. 465.

<sup>45</sup> R.S. Cotterill, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-14.

The arrows, which were made of wood and were perhaps an arm in thickness, were of an enormous size in proportion to their height. They were too big for the Spaniards. Seeing that their weapons were intolerably slow, the Spaniards tried, on many occasions, to use this weapon that had caused them so much damage. They never properly succeeded however. The cords of the arrows were made of twisted nerves of animals, that had been dried and anointed with bear oil. The Indians moved them around easily, and even held them aloft as they crossed the rivers as if they were as light as birds. They did so with a dexterity that was probably only possible had one been trained with it from an early age.

They also employed skin drums in war. On special occasions they carried standards: «[...] every Captain had his *Alférez* who had, in exchange, a large cane, two arms high, which the Indians called *Otatl*. At the top of it there were some white feathers which served as flags and which everyone recognized and obeyed»<sup>46</sup>. They also carried emblems of peace which were white, and emblems of war which were red.

Lastly, apart from all these different weapons and tools for different purposes that they created, they made musical instruments. We have a description of these via the writing of Ocampo again:

They played a so-called “*mariba*” which was made out of a cane, or dry stalk, from a plant called the “*Vera*”. To this they attached a cord made from deer intestine, and they pulled it tight. When plucked with the nail of a thumb, it would make a sound<sup>47</sup>.

They would also put grains of dried maize or stones into shells or small pumpkins. This would make them sound like maracas, and they were often very loud.

<sup>46</sup> A. Dávila Padilla, *op. cit.*, chap. LXIV, book I, pp. 208-209.

<sup>47</sup> J. Ocampo, *op. cit.*, p. 115.







# I

## CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH IN THE SERVICE OF THE CROWN

Menéndez de Avilés was the greatest genius  
to have been associated with Florida.

Jeannette Thurber

He was born in Avilés one Thursday, the 15th of February 1519, into the bosom of an old family. His father, Juan Alonso Álvarez de Avilés, had fought against the Moors in Granada. They were not rich, and Pedro Menéndez, who was one of twenty brothers and sisters (we do not know how many actually lived), was not even the second born. His father had died when he was very small, and his mother, Doña María Alonso de Arango, then married Juan Martínez de Sabuco.

Pedro, who was one of the younger members of this huge family, showed early signs of the independence and tenacity that were to be so characteristic of him. To off-load some of the financial burden of a large family, and to provide him with an education, his mother sent him to live with some relations. But he ran away and enlisted for two years as a cabin boy in the Armada which was then guarding the Cantabrian coast against French pirates. This was his first experience at sea where he was to spend so much of his life; the struggle against the French would also be an enduring feature of his glamorous career.

The family in Valladolid soon located him however, and they forced him to return. In an attempt to get him to stay, they arranged for him to marry his ten year old cousin, Doña María de Solís. But it was not to be, and shortly afterwards, after selling all that he owned, he bought his first boat, a "patache". It was with this small sailing boat, which was usually used as a patrol boat along the coasts, that he began his brilliant career as a sailor and in which he was able to demonstrate

his special gifts. It was a comparatively small ship, but even then he scored some notable successes against the privateers.

It did not take long for his prowess to come to the attention of the Crown. He was soon given official recognition for his activities. Later he was entrusted with tasks involving the personal security of the King, or the safe passage of ships sailing from Flanders and from the New World, which brought him prestige. Menéndez never had any formal training which meant that, to some extent, he lacked the discipline and order which might have helped to avoid some difficulties in his professional life. All the same, he managed to reach the highest, most responsible, positions in the Navy. This success inevitably meant that he had many enemies in high places. The Crown's unbreakable confidence in him that began at this early stage, was to be a key feature of his personal and professional life. He was in the service of the Crown until 1574, the year of his death. Most of that time he was engaged in missions of the highest national importance. Desirable cargos which were arriving at Spanish ports at the time had to be protected from attacks by privateers who were in search of bounty. Menéndez travelled frequently to America, Flanders, France and England, escorting these richly laden fleets <sup>1</sup>.

He also, as I have said, served as the King's protector. In this capacity he accompanied Charles V to Flanders and was nominated by the then Prince Philip as Captain General to the Navy of the Indies (1552). He also had to take the prince to England on the occasion of his marriage to Mary Tudor (in 1554), who was the eldest daughter of Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon, and who would be the second of Philip's four wives <sup>2</sup>.

This marriage was of the highest political and diplomatic consequence. It should be remembered that Spain was embroiled in constant religious wars; this betrothal therefore signified not only a means of ensuring an alliance between the two nations, but it also opened up the possibility of restoring Catholicism to England. Philip

<sup>1</sup> We should remember that since 1561 (the 16th April), it was prohibited to undertake the voyage without an escort due to the danger of being attacked by pirates. On the 18th of October 1564, it was established that all navigation to Tierra Firme and to New Spain would be carried out in August, and those to the Antilles in April.

<sup>2</sup> Prince Philip had been widowed after the death of his first wife Doña María de Portugal.



He was haunted by a powerful sense of duty, and this is particularly evident in that he felt obliged to agree to marry his aunt who was some eleven years older than him. At all events it was important for this matrimonial agreement not to be thwarted by problems which might arise on the crossing to London. It was considered that Menéndez had sufficient experience of this stretch of sea to be entrusted with supervising the security of the journey<sup>3</sup>.

All these journeys enhanced his prestige, and at the same time gave him the experience which made him into a great sailor. He by now possessed far-reaching technical expertise and a deep-seated grasp of the ways of the sea; these qualities would encourage him to invent his own ways of navigating. He put together two new kinds of boat, which were known as "galizabras"<sup>4</sup> and "balandras"<sup>5</sup>. He even created an instrument for calculating the East-West longitude. This was extremely useful, particularly for conquistadors who were plunged into a foreign environment; after walking for days on end without reaching their chosen destination, they often found that they wanted to return to where they had come from, which was no easy task.

The King knew of the difficulties involved in sea travel and always tried to encourage projects of this kind. When informed of this new invention, he issued a Royal Warrant on the 17th of February 1573 by which he authorized Menéndez to manufacture the said instrument, and to sell it, for a period of ten years:

[...] it has been brought to my notice that through your industry and work, the long experience that you have of the sea, and the continuous and distant navigations that you have made, you have actually discovered the East-West longitude... I grant you a licence to make and sell the instruments that are needed for the model that you have devised<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> Mary Tudor was to die in 1558, and with her death, Philip's hopes of recovering England for the Catholic church were lost. In 1559, at the treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis, which put an end to the religious wars between France, England and Spain, the marriage between Philip and Isabel de Valois, daughter of Henry II and Catherine de Medici, was agreed to.

<sup>4</sup> *Galizabra*: Sailing boat with a haulage of one hundred tons.

<sup>5</sup> *Balandra*: Small covered sailing boat with only one sail.

<sup>6</sup> E. Ruidíaz Caravia, *La Florida, su conquista y colonización por Pedro Menéndez de*

The royal confidence in Menéndez was evident in the many warrants and appointments which were placed in him. On the 26th of February 1557, by a further Royal Warrant, he was given leave to set off for the Indies as General of the first fleet <sup>7</sup>. On the 22nd of March of the same year, Philip II named him Captain General of the Navy in the Indies <sup>8</sup>.

On one of the few occasions when he was in Spain, on the 14th of June 1557, he was summoned by Philip II (or in his absence by the Princess of Portugal) <sup>9</sup> to accompany and protect a party of the merchant navy carrying a cargo of wool to England. Also aboard, apart from the wool, there were one thousand five hundred soldiers and one million two hundred thousand ducats in salaries and resources, which the Spanish army needed in the war against France. These were unloaded at Calais, and it was no doubt, of invaluable help in the victory of St. Quentin (on the 10th of August 1557) <sup>10</sup>.

The King would never forget this, and from then on Pedro Menéndez had the Crown's unconditional support in any difficult occasions that arose. On the 17th of May 1558, in Valladolid, Philip II bestowed him the honour of the Order of Santiago; this automatically made him into one of the illustrious men of his time; at the same time he took on the title of Captain General of the Indies Fleet, no time limits being imposed. It was an honour considered to befit his abundant merit. The Order of Santiago was usually given only to people belonging to old families; it thus brought him considerable social status. A close scrutiny of the personality in question was undertaken beforehand, and once admitted, one was not a complete

*Avilés*, Madrid, 1852, Appendix IV, pp. 366-367. Extract from A.G.I., leg. 12, est. 139, box 1.

<sup>7</sup> A.G.I.

<sup>8</sup> A.C.R., leg. 2, n.º 3, A-1.

<sup>9</sup> When Philip II became King Consort of England through his marriage to María Tudor, Doña Juana stayed in Spain as Regent. She was the brother of the Spanish monarch, and Princess of Portugal in her capacity as widow to King Juan of Portugal.

<sup>10</sup> Letter to Pedro Menéndez from the Princess of Portugal, dated the 14th of June 1557, in A.C.R., leg. 2, n.º 3. Letter to the Princess of Portugal from Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, on the 27th of May 1557, in response to the former. E. Ruidíaz Caravia, *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 23-24, an extract from the Archive in Simancas, War Room, inventory I, leg. 65.

member until twelve months had passed, six of them in a monastery belonging to the Order <sup>11</sup>.

Menéndez continued his dizzyingly successful career while the Crown demanded more and more of him. On the 23rd of January 1562, the King ordered him to prepare the fleet for New Spain and Tierra Firme. His brother, Bartolomé Menéndez <sup>12</sup>, would accompany him on this occasion. Menéndez was not a man to escape from responsibilities, nor to give in through fatigue. On this occasion, however, he made it known to Philip II that he did not want to go, for his eldest brother had just died, and he had not seen his family for a long time; he was yearning for a brief rest at home. Philip never paid any attention to this kind of consideration when he knew that he had the right man for the mission. I have already mentioned the monarch's unbounded sense of duty and sacrifice; he also expected it from others. After promising that the journey would be short—not more than two months—and persuading him that its execution was absolutely necessary for Spain (the galleons loaded with precious metals had been delayed too long and he urgently needed the money), he ordered them to go to sea as soon as possible, without even stopping in the Canaries, a habitual port of call for all expeditions.

So Menéndez then embarked on the new voyage to the Indies with two fleet, one for New Spain, Santo Domingo and Puerto Rico and the other for Tierra Firme under the command of Bartolomé Menéndez. In Pedro Menéndez's party, his son Juan also voyaged. When they arrived at their destination they were told that the ships had set off for Spain a month previously. Menéndez reckoned that, after the fifty days in which he had estimated it would take to arrive, it would not be possible to gather anything together to take back to the peninsula; the journey would then have been a useless waste. So he decided to stay for ten more months in the port, where he saved up quantities of money. With this he finally returned to Sevilla in June 1563 <sup>13</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> National History Archive, Military Orders of Santiago (OMS). Proof of a Gentleman, n.º 5.212.

<sup>12</sup> E. Ruidíaz Caravia, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 401. Instructions that were given to Pedro Menéndez de Avilés by the King on the 23rd of January 1562.

<sup>13</sup> B. Barrientos, *Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, fundador de La Florida*, University of Florida, Gainesville, 1965.

This was not the first occasion that he ignored instructions and resolved the situation on the spot. His confidence in himself was high. This might have irritated a King who never tolerated the slightest disrespect to his authority, but Pedro Menéndez seemed always to be successful. He was therefore not only not reproached for disobeying orders, but the King's trust in him doubled.

## II

### CONFLICTS WITH THE "CASA DE CONTRATACIÓN"

One of the most important functions of the "Casa de Contratación" came to be to coordinate the expeditions to the Indies. In addition, its officials possessed the undisputed privilege (undisputed, that is, until the coming of Pedro Menéndez) of appointing the generals to captain the fleet. Their choice was not always suitable however. It was widely acknowledged that on several occasions the inadequacy of the generals had forfeited the lives of many men, not to mention ships and money. For this reason, and because of the undisputed qualities that Pedro Menéndez had to offer, Philip II made him Captain General of the Indies; his brother Bartolomé Menéndez was made Admiral at the same time. All this was done without even consulting the officials at the "Casa de Contratación".

The King's decision was a great personal honour to Menéndez, but it was nevertheless to embroil him in an interminable series of difficulties, which would eventually take him to prison. Seeing that their privileges had been so blatantly trampled over, the officials turned on Pedro Menéndez and his brother (they dared not have an open dispute with the monarch himself); so outraged were they that the brothers Menéndez became the object of all kinds of criticism and suspicion. They must have feared that the two were turning into an alternative source of power, a scenario which they were simply not prepared to stomach.

Arguments with the "Casa de Contratación" were to flare up again and again; a hardened, mutual antipathy emerged which became increasingly difficult to conceal. But matters became a great deal more serious after the incident involving the royal standard which arose in

the following way. Pedro Menéndez had his ships moored in the port of Sanlúcar at the time. One day it was brought to his notice that some officials from the "Casa de Contratación" were arriving in a boat in which the red royal standard, with its familiar coat of arms, stood fluttering in the wind. It was an emblem which could only be used by the King or by the Captain General of the fleet (who was, of course, Pedro Menéndez). So, in a state of extreme irritation, Menéndez went straight up to the ship and hoisted the standard out violently. The officials were furious at this behaviour, particularly because of who was implicated, no doubt. In any case, the rift between them deepened.

On their return from the Indies in June 1563<sup>1</sup>, Menéndez and his brother Bartolomé went to Sevilla. There they found themselves accused by the "Casa de Contratación" of smuggling, and of abusing power. The jealous officials were unable to infer what had actually happened in their most recent voyage, which had also been managed by the King himself; they therefore looked for any blame that had incurred on previous journeys. Their investigations ended with both brothers in jail. The brothers defended themselves from these accusations of course, alleging that they had never taken anything from the Indies that was not then placed in the royal coffers; in any case, they had transported only clothes, weapons and silver, all of which were entirely necessary for the management of the fleet.

In the middle of the trial (in 1563) Menéndez escaped and reached Madrid where he explained his position to the King, and the way in which his enemies seemed to be plotting against him. He knew that the monarch would listen to him, as indeed he did. Philip was utterly convinced that Menéndez was innocent, so much so that he gave orders to the "Casa de Contratación" to come up with a just, rapid verdict, and also that they take into account only the provable facts and not vague, unqualified possibilities<sup>2</sup>.

But he returned to prison. In spite of the King's request for swiftness the officials, while still unable to prove or to substantiate their

<sup>1</sup> They had set out on this journey on the 23rd of January 1562.

<sup>2</sup> A process of damages and blame which came out against General Pedro Menéndez de Avilés in the fleet and navy which came from Tierra Firme in the year 1563, A.G.I., Justicia, 970.

accusations, made out that the case needed to be scrutinised by the Royal Council of the Indies in order to come to a final judgement. They thus denied granting them freedom. Menéndez became desperate for the process to gather pace. The days passed and their treatment got rougher; no news came.

He managed to write to the King in secret to inform him again of the situation in which he and his brother found themselves. On the 21st of August 1563 he wrote:

Royal and Catholic Majesty. I have been presented before the officials of the "Casa de Contratación" of this town (Sevilla) under the terms which were agreed on, and I have given the fines that were asked of me twenty days ago when they took me prisoner [...] and I would say to Your Majesty in truth, that all that they have accused me of are well known prejudices; many of them date from four or five years ago [...] and they tell me, in no uncertain terms, that I have taken away much authority from their profession<sup>3</sup>.

The trial was prolonged and the days, which already seemed eternal to Menéndez, turned into months. He sensed that the end of his captivity would still take some time, and little by little he sank into a deep depression; not only did he feel unjustly treated, but he felt severely frustrated that his journeys were being so endlessly delayed and that his ships were straying idly from port to port, losing wealth.

But all of a sudden, his misfortune became even more dramatic when he heard that his only son, Juan Menéndez, had not returned from San Juan de Ulúa. Menéndez had ordered him to wait for the stormy season to subside before setting off, but Juan, no doubt equally bold, ignored his experienced father's advice and was lost at sea. His father longed to set out to search for him; prison became intolerable, and the officials of the "Casa de Contratación" had not even dispatched the case on which he was charged to the Council for the Indies.

On the 15th and 24th of September, he wrote again to the King:

<sup>3</sup> E. Ruidíaz Caravia, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 42. Copy in the Hydrographic Department, Madrid.



[...]they have tried, and are trying, by all possible means to rid me of my honour and my fortune, and to make me waste my life; my friends pity me on seeing me in such a state<sup>4</sup>.

His health was breaking down, but above all it was his self-esteem that had sunk so miserably, shut up as he was among criminals, his rank or station utterly disregarded.

He continuously urged them to listen to him, so much so that he was punished:

[...] and that they send the trial to the Royal Council of the Indies, where we would be listened to and sentenced and punished if we are found guilty, and if we are not found so, that they set us free so that we can return to being good captains as we are and have been [...] I earnestly ask your Majesty to order them to let justice be done, as soon as possible, because Bartolomé Menéndez, my brother has been diagnosed by the doctors as being consumptive (an illness in which you have constant fever) and he will die if he cannot enjoy the fresh air of his home; I myself am very weak and my life feels as if it is ending, which is what the Judges of the Contratación must surely desire<sup>5</sup>.

During this time, news was arriving of Tristán de Luna's reverses; the French presence on the east coast of Florida was also confirmed. The Spanish ambassador in France, Francisco de Álava, had informed Philip of the preparations being made in Paris for the voyage to Florida. He had even presented himself to the Queen Mother in protest. But the ambassador always received the same evasive answers and false promises that anyone who acted against Spanish interests in the Indies would receive severe punishment. Though initially this might have seemed satisfactory, Florida was still at risk, for France had often shown that it did not always accept the rights of Spain over territory which it judged her own.

After so many unsuccessful expeditions, it had come to be thought that Florida would represent only a bitter memory in Spanish

<sup>4</sup> E. Ruidíaz Caravia, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 43-51.

<sup>5</sup> E. Ruidíaz Caravia, *op. cit.*, vol. II, letter of the 8th of January 1564. Copy in the Hydrographic Department, Madrid.

history, but this new political and religious factor was to awaken interest in the area with renewed urgency. The King had no other alternative; in spite of the fact that he had made a resolution against it, he now wanted to organize another journey there without delay. The war with France was seen to have ended at the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis (in 1559)<sup>6</sup>. In Europe, the Huguenot threat had retreated after the marriage of Philip II to Isabel Valois (1560-1568), but the same friction now re-emerged on the other side of the Atlantic, in Florida. Philip would not tolerate this new threat to his political and religious interests lightly.

They could not afford to make a wrong move this time in Florida. A mistake would be the prelude to an inevitable injection of French power. The right person had to be chosen to ensure victory over all the various, ruinous elements which had been the downfall of previous expeditions. But this time the French posed a further major complication, not to mention other European powers which were also ready to pounce and to follow the French initiative of rushing to extend their power in other parts of this new continent.

Faced with so dangerous a situation, Philip began to think of Pedro Menéndez again, even though he would have to do what he could to accelerate the trial which the latter had pending with the "Casa de Contratación", and to bring it to a proper end. So he gave strict orders for proceedings to start immediately at the Council for the Indies and arranged for Menéndez to be transferred to a royal prison in Madrid, so that he could be heard by the authorities (18th of June 1564). He could see that he would not be able to get out in any other way.

So Menéndez eventually obtained provisional bail from the Council of the Indies (on the 7th of August 1564). At the beginning of 1565, he was accused on six minor charges and after paying a heavy fine which was in fact handled largely by the King, was freed without further charges. This was not the first time that Philip II had openly challenged a decision made by the Council of the Indies when he considered it to be unjust or inopportune<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> This treaty was signed after the battle of St. Quentin, which took place in 1557.

<sup>7</sup> It should be remembered that Alvar Cabeza de Vaca had been condemned in 1540 to a year in prison, after being accused of disturbing the order with his boisterous

At the time, it seemed that Pedro Menéndez would be able to forget these ugly scenes with the "Casa de Contratación". Nevertheless, the difficulties were not to disappear. The officials had not forgiven him this further affront and they would make him feel their displeasure in all his subsequent voyages.

defence of the Indians. But the monarch then pardoned him, without even consulting the Council of the Indies. He even went on to make him a member of the High Court in Sevilla.

### III

#### SETTLEMENT

As soon as he had been set free, Philip II told Menéndez of his hopes and plans for Florida. The future Adelantado began pouring over all the reports that the survivors of previous expeditions had written, above all those by De Soto and De Luna which had pertinent details about the areas of Cosa, Nanipacana and Santa Elena. Once he had carefully researched the position there, he made a long memorandum in which he listed all that he thought would be necessary for carrying out the operation effectively; he took the reports about recent events fully into account. Menéndez never doubted his own capacity to lead the expedition; on the contrary, he knew that once he had successfully accomplished the expedition, he would stand in greatly improved stead, politically, socially as well as financially. He was anxious that nothing should be improvised at the last minute, that they should be utterly ready.

Pedro Menéndez had his own sources of information about the situation in Florida and he knew about the privateers in the area. It was in fact a privateer called Mimoso, who was married to a French woman, who delivered the intelligence. Arriving in Tenerife, Mimoso said that he was on his way to Florida; he was not alone but there were large groups of French and Englishmen.

In Spain, people were seriously worried about the French presence, because they had succeeded in establishing a colony on land (in Santa Elena). It ought not, however, to be forgotten that the English had also been prowling around the area since 1563. Among those who defended the notion of the liberty of the seas, thereby rejecting the exclusive Spanish claim, was a group led by Hawkins, who would

attack Spanish ships to seize any riches they might have on board. These assaults would also be an occasion to snatch away any valuable documents revealing the secret politics of the Crown<sup>1</sup>.

They had to do whatever they could to avoid other powers settling in Florida. This was an even more crucial case for it was a question of defending a highly strategic zone which, if under foreign control, could seriously compromise Spanish trade in the Indies overall. Politically speaking, it was evident that these incursions could affect their interests in Florida as well as those in nearby islands, where many black slaves lived. If the latter were encouraged by the French and the English and aided by the indigenous people who were also generally hostile to the Spaniards, they could initiate a damaging insurrection<sup>2</sup>. Any rebellion of this kind would have ill-fated consequences, not only for the honour of the Spanish crown; there would be a series of highly injurious economic repercussions. At that time, all labour involved the black African slave. If they were brought into conflict, the losses would be enormous.

These reasons alone would have justified the voyage. But it is necessary to cite another which, though I mention it last, is certainly not the least significant. This is the religious aspect. The French stationed in Fort Carolina were Huguenots<sup>3</sup>, a fact which brought extraordinary unease to the Crown and to Menéndez.

The obsession to maintain the purity of religion in every conquered place could already be observed in the Royal Commands to the "Casa de Contratación" in 1531, where it was specified:

[...] we order and command that no newly converted Moor or Jew of our Holy faith can or should journey to the Indies [...] and we command that no one who has converted nor any son nor grandson of anyone burnt for the grave crime of heresy, can or should journey to the Indies<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> P. Hoffman, *The defense of the Indies, 1535-1574. A study in the modernization of the Spanish State*, University of Florida, 1969, p. 190.

<sup>2</sup> In 1530, only in Puerto Rico were there more than one thousand five hundred slaves.

<sup>3</sup> Calvinist Protestants.

<sup>4</sup> Decree number nineteen.

Florida was no exception to this policy and the danger on this occasion was real and immediate.

Spain and its Crown had set themselves up as the chief defenders of Catholicism in Europe against all other religions or heresies. This was not only because of its own conviction, but because of its «contract» to do so. By the papal bull, the *Inter Caetera*, Pope Alexander VI had granted Spain the right to establish herself on the New Continent, on the condition that it christianize and win the territory for the Catholic church. Apart from the indigenous religions, which had had to be fought in Florida, there was also the enormous risk that the Huguenots would reach the souls of the Indians before the Spanish missionaries were able to do so.

In all the journeys to the New World the conquering spirit was bound up with religious zeal. It has often been said that the Spanish conquistador «brandished the sword in one hand and the cross in the other»<sup>5</sup>; the first was perhaps raised more often, but both were undoubtedly important.

There have been enormous controversies over whether it was a question of evangelization or conquest; on occasion there have been outright confrontations between conquerors and missionaries. In Florida, the history of the Catholic church did not really begin until the arrival of Pedro Menéndez de Avilés (in 1565). (This was the case only if missionary activity necessarily implies the installation of proper, stable missions. From the very first voyage undertaken by Ponce de León in 1513, the Crown had repeatedly insisted on the need to treat the Indians well so as to make their ultimate conversion less problematic).

As for Menéndez, his religious nature, his loyalty to the Crown and his obsession for Florida underpinned the character of his life: «he has spread the catholic faith widely and many people have received the Holy Gospel through him»<sup>6</sup>. As in many other ways, he had his own ideas about the religious angle in Florida. Latterly, he would have an opportunity to put them into practice.

<sup>5</sup> V. Sierra, *Así se hizo América: la expansión de la hispanidad en el siglo xvi*, Madrid, 1955.

<sup>6</sup> B. Barrientos, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

From the very first, he asked the Chief Jesuit Vicar, Francisco de Borja, to take Jesuit monks with him on his expedition. In this he would once again break the prevailing norm<sup>7</sup> which had been to send only members of the Mendicant Orders across the Atlantic: Franciscans, Dominicans, Augustinians for example. However he did so with the full approval of the Crown. Menéndez believed that, on this occasion, the monks' mission was not only to teach Christianity to the Indians, but also at some crucial moments, they may be called upon to fight against the Huguenot influence which had made some tentative advances. For that reason, he needed to have people with a greater training who would be able to guarantee achievements in adverse conditions. Only the Jesuits seemed to him sufficiently prepared for that.

They had to set to work with the greatest secrecy possible for reasons of both a religious and political nature. Philip II was as convinced as Menéndez that if they managed to surprise the French they would be at a great advantage. The Asturian born Menéndez had a dream to conquer Florida, to carry out its conversion to Christianity and to establish a settlement there, and this vision would stay with him for the rest of his life. If he was successful in that, he would have vindicated the great trust that the King had always had in him, he would reaffirm his name against all past accusations and he would be confirmed as one of the great Spanish heroes of the era.

Both the King and Pedro Menéndez were extremely preoccupied by Florida. They began the negotiations to procure the "Capitulación" on the 3rd of February 1565, which was about the time that Menéndez's trial had finally ended. These official procedures were dealt with by the 20th of March 1565, with the signing of the "Asiento"<sup>8</sup> which laid out the conditions for the population and the conquest of Florida. The title of Adelantado was granted as well as a Royal Provision from Philip II which entrusted the Official Judge of Cádiz to help in any way he could in the supplying of provisions and the

<sup>7</sup> This rule had been in force since the 9th of May 1522.

<sup>8</sup> A.C.R., leg. 2, n.º 5. Codoinao, A.G.I., tome XXIII, pp. 242-259. C. Vigil, *Noticias biográfico-genealógicas de Pedro Menéndez de Avilés*, Gijón, 1987, Appendix III, p. 166. M. del Vas Mingo, *op. cit.*, pp. 405-412. In English: E. Lyon, *The Enterprise of Florida*, Gainesville, 1983, appendix, pp. 213-219.



general preparation of the fleet<sup>9</sup>. Two days later he added the title of Adelantado of Florida to the "Capitulación". The Crown had by then given this title out four times: to Ponce de León, to Vázquez de Ayllón, to Pánfilo de Narváez and to Hernando de Soto. None of them had been able to use it, and had failed and even perished in the attempt to possess it.

Pedro Menéndez's "Asiento" was no exception to those usually signed in the xvth century for the purposes of going to the New World. The Crown was adept at not giving away too many privileges, except those that were necessary for getting the most out of the voyages; the latter always had limitations of some kind. This had been the case since the famous "Capitulaciones" of the Holy Faith, the agreement between the Catholic Kings and Columbus<sup>10</sup>, in which, because they did not know what to expect from this first expedition to the Indies, they granted him extraordinary powers and much wealth.

The "Capitulación" was composed of two parts. The first articulated the obligations and the commitments that the Adelantado was to acquire; the other comprised what the Crown offered in exchange.

Pedro Menéndez was obliged to depart before June of that same year (1565) with his own fleet<sup>11</sup>, that was led by the galleon *San Pelayo*, a name echoing its Asturian origin. Almost half of the six hundred men accompanying the expedition fitted into it, and it was also much more secure and comfortable than the other ships in the fleet. When they were close to Florida, they distributed themselves into the smaller ships so as to look for the best means of approaching the land.

They took food and livestock to the coast to last for a whole year, and arranged it in three parts according to the division in the settlement; over half were married farmers<sup>12</sup>. The latter were put in safe settlements together with a group of monks who would look not only to imparting Christian knowledge to the Indians, but also to assisting

<sup>9</sup> A.C.R., leg. 2, n.º 3-b.

<sup>10</sup> These Capitulaciones were signed on the 17th of April 1492, and by them, the Crown conceded the title of Admiral, Viceroy and Governor General of the lands discovered and a tenth of all the products obtained.

<sup>11</sup> Pedro Menéndez de Avilés' "Asiento", paragraph 12.

<sup>12</sup> Pedro Menéndez de Avilés' "Asiento", paragraph 4.

the religious welfare of the Spaniards<sup>13</sup>. This establishment would have to be set up peacefully, so that when and if the two peoples came to live side by side, relations would not be tense.

For the immense human and economic effort that the whole operation involved, Pedro Menéndez de Avilés was offered:

— Titles: Governor and Captain General of Florida and of the Fleet for the Indies, as for all the towns which he would found<sup>14</sup>. This title would last for his whole life and that of his heir, and the salary would proceed from these lands. He would be Adelantado and Alguacil Mayor of the Audiencia of Florida in perpetuity<sup>15</sup>. He would be made a Marquis on his return.

— The option to share out the lands between his men and to take for himself twenty five square leagues in the place he so desired, as well as a 15th part in the mines, rocks and fruits which he would find in Florida<sup>16</sup>.

— A part in the income, mines and fruit of Florida<sup>17</sup>.

— Exemption from the payment of duties at the metal foundation<sup>18</sup>.

— Two fishing grounds in Florida, one of pearls and the other of fish<sup>19</sup>.

— Exemption from taxes for ten years for him and for his companions; included among these were the «almoxarifazgo», the «diezmo», the «galera» and the «aberas», etc<sup>20</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> Pedro Menéndez de Avilés' "Asiento", paragraph 6.

<sup>14</sup> A.C.R., leg. 5, n.º 1. Pedro Menéndez de Avilés' "Asiento", paragraph 14.

<sup>15</sup> A.C.R., leg. 5, n.º 3. Pedro Menéndez de Avilés' "Asiento", paragraphs 17 and 19. The Crown conferred this title and, in spite of numerous claims on the Adelantado's death by his heirs, today the title of Adelantado of La Florida belongs to the Marquis of San Esteban del Mar.

<sup>16</sup> A.C.R., leg. 2, n.ºs 3, 4 and 54. Pedro Menéndez de Avilés' "Asiento", paragraph 20.

<sup>17</sup> A.C.R., leg. 2, n.º 12. Pedro Menéndez de Avilés' "Asiento", paragraph 12.

<sup>18</sup> A.C.R., leg. 2, n.º 12. Pedro Menéndez de Avilés' "Asiento", paragraphs 23. Royal Warrant of the 22nd of March 1565.

<sup>19</sup> A.C.R., leg. 2, n.º 7. Pedro Menéndez de Avilés' "Asiento", paragraph 22. Royal Warrant of the 22nd of March 1565.

<sup>20</sup> A.C.R., leg. 2, n.º 12. Pedro Menéndez de Avilés' "Asiento", paragraph 26. Royal Warrant of the 22nd of March 1565.

— When it was necessary for the people of Florida, he had a licence to take products such as ships, food, drinks, livestock, etc. from Santo Domingo, Puerto Rico and Cuba, with the same duties that they had sailed with from Spain <sup>21</sup>.

— All that they could seize from the privateers for a period of six years would be for Pedro Menéndez and his successors <sup>22</sup>.

— During the same period of time, the officials from the “Casa de Contratación” or from whatever other organisation should treat the fleet of Pedro Menéndez de Avilés and his officials with the greatest favour.

The tone of this expedition was fundamentally different to previous ones. They were to try to install themselves unaggressively and to live peacefully amongst the Indians. There was now a single, identified enemy: the French. They would expel them and appeal to the Indians.

The fact that in the “Capitulación” Menéndez was granted the titles and fishing rights in perpetuity, (which was unusual), underlines once again what everyone already knew: the extreme delicacy of the operation which was to be undertaken and the unequivocal trust which Philip had in his Adelantado. In spite of everything, the King stood firm in the financial side of the agreement, as in previous “Capitulaciones”. He offered much, without taking too much of a risk, for he could only play with as much money as would be gained or produced there. The Crown could not acquire economic obligations for the present nor the future, and the point was laboured in the following way:

And so that you, the undersigned, Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, should do and fulfil all that has been agreed upon with more will, it is our grace and will that you are our Governor and Captain General of the said coast and land of Florida and of all the peoples which have settled there, for all the days of your life and that of your son or your son-in-law; and you must take from us every year the salary of two thousand ducats, which will be paid in fruit and income which

<sup>21</sup> Pedro Menéndez de Avilés’ “Asiento”, paragraph 28.

<sup>22</sup> Pedro Menéndez de Avilés’ “Asiento”, paragraph 32.

belongs to us on the said land; and if we do not have it we are not obliged to give and pay you the said salary<sup>23</sup>.

If we take into account only the "Asientos"<sup>24</sup> specifying Florida that had been dispatched before Pedro Menéndez (Tristán de Luna did not have a "Capitulación"), we can establish several conclusions: the objective was always the same, to populate and to colonize, with expressed indications, in some of them, to Christianize and to do so peacefully. As far as the dimensions of the expedition were concerned, these were increasing considerably on each voyage; on this occasion some stringent economic decisions had to be taken.

For that reason, the powers granted were also much greater. The naval titles conferred upon him, as well as the "Adelantamiento", the Governorship and the title of "Alguacil" were to extend to an heir and to last in perpetuity. Until then, they had only been granted for the duration of the life of the person concerned (that is to say, they were non-hereditary), the only exception being when Pánfilo de Narváez was granted the "Alguacil Mayor" as a hereditary title.

Salaries and tax exemptions were likewise given to Menéndez. As for the number of slaves, while with Ponce de León and Pánfilo de Narváez the subject was barely mentioned, Hernando de Soto was given fifty, Vázquez de Ayllón eight. On this occasion, the number was five hundred, free of charge<sup>25</sup>. However, Pedro Menéndez never did make use of this privilege.

With the evidence of the French presence, Pedro Menéndez tried to obtain extra artillery and munitions, but his habitual rival, the "Casa de Contratación", put all kinds of impediments in his way. They defended their argument by saying that it was unclear how many Frenchmen there were actually there; for that reason the large quantity he was already taking seemed enough.

<sup>23</sup> Pedro Menéndez de Avilés' "Capitulación", paragraph 14.

<sup>24</sup> E. Lyon, *op. cit.*

<sup>25</sup> Pedro Menéndez de Avilés' "Asiento", paragraph 9.

#### IV

### FIRST FRENCH VOYAGES TO FLORIDA. FORT CHARLES

The relationship between Spain and France was highly awkward in spite of the fact that, they had, in theory, been at peace since 1559, the year of the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis. Their economic, political and religious interests were always colliding in Europe; now it seemed that this conflict would open on a new front, in Florida.

The two countries wielded persuasive arguments to justify their presence there. Spain had not the slightest doubt: the Papal Bull had granted them exclusive access to this part of the world; Christopher Columbus had discovered the Continent in 1492 and Ponce de León had taken possession of Florida in the name of the Spanish King in 1513. Meanwhile, France based its claim on the incidence of the journey of the Florentine, Verrazzano, in 1524 who, after following the coast around the region of what is now New York, had returned without managing to disembark.

The French Crown knew that the international law prevailing in the xvth century established that the discovery of lands not belonging to any Christian prince was enough to justify their appropriation<sup>1</sup>. The Pope, whose supreme authority was recognized by the whole of the European world in the xvth century, ruled in 1493, in his bull the *Inter Caetera*, that the New World be shared between Spain and Portugal. This important decision was ratified with some variations in Tordesillas (in 1494).

<sup>1</sup> F. Morales Padrón, *Teoría y Leyes de la conquista*, Madrid, 1979, Ibero-American Centre for Cooperation.

This treaty (Tordesillas) shows us that it was accepted as absolutely natural that the Spaniards and the Portuguese, who had discovered the new territory, should stay and establish themselves there. At this stage, the French state gave no official backing to expeditions, so as not to get entangled in diplomatic conflicts. They were however financed and backed by the strong man of France, Coligny, a traditional enemy of Spain<sup>2</sup>, and one of the main leaders of the Protestant faction.

Shortly after the Spaniards, Frenchmen had started to explore the northern part of the new continent. A little while after the above mentioned journey of Verrazzano, sent by Francis I between 1534 and 1541, Jacques Cartier, a prestigious French mariner undertook three journeys there. In this way, France had penetrated the continent for the first time and had made contact with the Indians. In his journeys Cartier always avoided anywhere that the Spaniards were, for he knew, full well, that they were within their rights. The area they explored, which they described as «even larger than Europe herself», was called New France<sup>3</sup>.

During all that time, though they were much disrupted by continuous assaults on their ships and on various places on the coast, the Spaniards thought of the French ships as simple pirates, just as they did those of other nationalities which roamed in wait on the ocean.

On the 18th of February 1562, Jean Ribault, with René de Laudonnière as captain of some hundred volunteers, departed to Florida on a journey which greatly alarmed the Spanish Crown. The objectives of this expedition were clear: they were no longer to be mere pirates. It was to be a political action of great magnitude. They wanted to try and put an end to the Philip II's pre-eminence in Ultramar and Europe once and for all, and to break the monopoly of gold which Spain used, among other things, to finance its wars. Also, they wanted to find a place where the French Huguenots, who had been expelled from their country, could establish themselves.

<sup>2</sup> Admiral Coligny had been made prisoner in 1557 at the battle of St. Quentin. He was not freed until two years later at the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis. Coligny belonged to one of the most important French noble families that was associated with the Calvinist religion.

<sup>3</sup> René de Laudonnière, *Historical Collections Relating to the first discovery and settlement of Florida*, vol. I, p. 166, Paris, 1586.



On the 30th of May 1562 they arrived at the mouth of a river which they called Mayo (today it is San Juan), where they were amicably received by a small group of Indians who went out to meet them. This circumstance, and the seemingly rather favourable conditions in the area, encouraged them to disembark and to take possession of the land in the name of their King. In the days that followed, they continued to explore the coast (beside what is now Georgia and Florida). Here they came across many rivers, some of them of enormous width, «just like the Seine»<sup>4</sup>.

When they returned to where they had arrived (the river Mayo), they began constructing a small fortress which they called Charlesfort, in honour of the French King Charles IX. Ribault, having concluded his mission, left a reserve guard of twenty-five soldiers at the fort with Captain Albert in charge. He then set off for France (where he arrived on the 20th of July 1562), promising to return as soon as possible with human and material resources to help create a French colony there. But he was unable to fulfil his intention for the moment. On reaching his country, he found it embroiled in a full civil war and Florida was removed from being an immediate political goal.

Meanwhile on the other side of the Atlantic, the soldiers who had stayed in Charlesfort became tired of waiting for reinforcements from France. They had no provisions and they felt forgotten and abandoned. Soon they had to appeal to the Indians, in a place called Guale where, thanks to the generosity of the cacique, they had occasion to feed themselves properly for a few more months.

This would not be the only problem for this small group of Frenchmen. When they returned to the fort after having eaten their fill, they found the building practically destroyed by an accidental fire. It should be pointed out that the French were always on fairly good terms with the Indians. At this setback, they even helped them to build a new fortress which was only slightly smaller than the previous one.

They waited impatiently for news from France. They were isolated, they had lost practically everything in the fire and the troops began to be disorderly and disruptive. In order to avoid revolt, Captain Albert became overly authoritative, and took severe measures against some of

<sup>4</sup> M. Basanier, *Historia Notable de La Florida*, Paris, 1586.



his men who were already sufficiently punished by the bleak conditions. In this way, not only did he lose control of the situation, but he created so acute a malaise that he was assassinated by his own soldiers in mysterious circumstances. He was substituted by Nicolas Barré.

After all that had happened, they finally lost hope of receiving the reinforcements that Ribault had promised to bring. They therefore decided to construct a brigantine and to return to their country. When they had done this they started out with the few belongings that remained to them once the weather was suitable. Not even then did fortune favour them: they were becalmed, and after three weeks they had hardly moved; they had exhausted the provisions that they had put together for the voyage and they began to die in desperate circumstances. Only then did providence intervene. They were found in that cheerless state by an English ship which, after taking the severely sick to the coast, brought the rest to England.

## V

### THE HUGUENOT DANGER: LAUDONNIÈRE

Hardly had peace been restored in France<sup>1</sup> than Coligny decided to organize a new trip to Florida. He appointed a famous, formidable sailor, René de Laudonnière as captain. The latter had accompanied Ribault on his first expedition, he knew the route well and he was easily capable of directing the fleet to Charlesfort.

This expedition had a special significance for France. I have already referred to their objectives for Florida, but on this occasion, one should add Coligny's desire to unite the French under a common ideal and against a common enemy. This was thought to be an inspired way to get the people to forget the aftermath of a bloody civil war, as far as was possible. On the 26th of April, with three ships, some three hundred men, four women and a small number of servants, they set off from the port of Grace in the direction of England. There they changed course for Tenerife. Here they stocked up with fresh water, and then resumed the long voyage to Florida. Huguenot clerics did not actually accompany this expedition in spite of the fact that the Spaniards were fearful of this prospect. The idea of spreading their religious creed to the New World must not have entered into their plans, at least for the moment. The majority of the members of the expedition were however espousers of the Huguenot-Calvinist religion and they would shortly begin to explain their beliefs to the Indians.

<sup>1</sup> Peace was made at the Treaty of Amboise on the 19th of March 1563 between Catherine de Medicis and Prince Condé. In the treaty it was agreed that the high nobility were at liberty to practice protestantism in some specific cities.

In fifteen days they arrived in Dominica and on the 22nd of June 1564, they found themselves by a river which they called the «Delfines»<sup>2</sup>, because of the number of dolphins they saw in it. They then went as far as the river Mayo, which they reached on the 25th of June 1564. As had happened on the first voyage, as soon as they had disembarked they were received in an extremely amicable manner by the Indians, who came out to meet them with the cacique himself and his family (Cacique Saturiba).

Saturiba took advantage of the French joy at this warm welcome, for he soon informed them of his wish to get them to help him to conquer his eternal foes, the Timucua Indians. The French captain did not hesitate to promise to collaborate unconditionally; in this way he won the help of the Indian chief and all his men.

Across the river Mayo, they found a place which seemed ideal as a site for setting up a base. In this wooded area (the wood itself proved very necessary) where there were also fresh water streams, they began to construct a new fort which included workshops and guards' posts on the outside. In this they were helped by the Indians. When the fortress was completed, they called it Fort Carolina, again in honour of the French King Charles IX.

On the 28th of July 1564, they sent the ship the *Isabella* to tell the Queen (Catherine of Medici) —who exercised power while her son (Charles IX) continued to be a minor— what they had found. Meanwhile Saturiba pressed them to fulfil their promise to help against his enemies as soon as possible. In reply, Laudonnière merely put off the matter and alleged that he needed time to settle down. But the Cacique was disgusted by such apparent disloyalty, and decided to march into battle alone. In spite of Saturiba's subsequent triumph over the Timucua, the former did not forgive the French for breaking their promise. Fearful of open warfare, they set fire to the fields surrounding the fort.

During the months of June, July and August they received continuous visits at the fort from Caciques of nearby tribes, who suggested making an alliance. This earnest desire to rely on his support and friendship made the French captain believe that almost everyone

<sup>2</sup> M. Basanier, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

was at war with the other and for that reason, none wanted to miss this opportunity to establish relations with him.

Meanwhile, the hope of finding gold and silver had practically disappeared and the supplies of food were thinning. The troops began to dream of returning or at least of heading for some other place in the Indies which would be more worth their while, even if it did belong to the Spaniards.

On the 20th of September 1564, Laudonnière fell ill, a situation which his men immediately exploited for they tried to replace him with another captain who was more prepared to leave for France. The ships which Laudonnière had sent to France beforehand to get hold of further supplies, had also brought some reports of Laudonnière's dubious capacity to direct the expedition in Florida. Soldiers had also denounced his continuous abuses of power and the insensitive way he treated his troops.

They could have tried to obtain food from the Indians, but they were conscious of the fact that this could then embroil them in the internal disputes between these people. They had no wish to participate in them, since they had not come to Florida for that. Nor did they now promise to collaborate when they knew that they would not be able to; they had learnt their lesson from the disastrous experience that they had had with Saturiba. So they opted for another means of finding food: to seize a Spanish ship in which they would surely be able to find whatever they needed<sup>3</sup>. Without the consent of the Captain, they set off towards the sea. However, not only were they unable to carry out their plan but all were, in fact, captured by the Spaniards. After this, discontent among the French troops turned into open rebellion. Three prisoners were sent to Spain as proof of the French presence in their midst and of the obvious danger which this entailed for Spanish interests.

Meanwhile, Laudonnière, who was unaware of these events, was fearful that the men who had disappeared with part of the fleet might have escaped to France, and told the rest of the party of his wish to construct two new launches in order to go in search of the fugitive group. The troops accepted apparently, even though their intention was

<sup>3</sup> Ch. Lowery Woodbury, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 79.

none other than to go to other areas to look for food, once they had finished making the boats. When Laudonnière's already delicate health began to worsen, the situation became complicated; it was no longer necessary to feign loyalty to the dying man. His men imprisoned him in one of the ships which was left and the rest, brandishing all the weapons that remained, set off on the 18th of December, led by Bertrand Sonferrent, for New Spain <sup>4</sup>.

On the way they met a Spanish ship which was sailing close to the Jamaican coast. Not only did they plunder all that they found on it, but they held the Governor of the island captive. Other Spanish ships which were patrolling these waters then freed him, however, and took some of the French prisoners. After they heard of these events, the Spanish Crown had first hand proof of the French presence in the region and how they had established Fort Carolina. Deeply affected by the experience of this defeat, or perhaps by sincere regret at having disobeyed orders, a small group of seditious Frenchmen returned to Florida (on the 25th of March 1565), where they were executed by their own companions who were unable to ignore Laudonnière's orders.

At this time there had also been the first contact between the French and Spanish on land. One day, two Spanish Christians approached the fort. They told that after being shipwrecked near the land of the Cacique Carlos (close to the island of the Mártires), they had spent more than fifteen years in captivity.

The situation was chaotic for the French party. They had already lost the hope of ever receiving help from their country, though they were still unable to explain the reason. They had no food available and the Indians did not even come anywhere near the fort; this may have been because they had no food to give, or to avoid having to give any. For the French, hunger and the resulting weakness was such that they could not even continue working to finish the ships which would help them return. The increasingly obvious reality that they would never get out heightened their sense of desperation. As it was, they had to obtain supplies so that the troops would not merely survive, but also have enough energy to work on the construction of the ships.

<sup>4</sup> M. Basanier, *op. cit.*

In these circumstances, Laudonnière had word from the Cacique Utina, who knew of the desperate state of the Frenchman; the latter asked Laudonnière for some soldiers to help him fight against one of his subjects who had disobeyed him, the Cacique Actina. But their weakness was such that, even at the prospect of this help, it was inordinately difficult to put together a small group of men to fight. Many of them refused to be chosen, arguing that they were not going to use up their last energies trying to get hold of food in such a roundabout way; it would be less of an effort to capture the Cacique and then force his tribe to give them what they asked for.

To add insult to injury Utina, taking advantage of their weakness, deceived them. In spite of the assistance that the French had given, which was admittedly minimal (though in their conditions had cost them a supreme effort) he barely brought them anything in return. They had to try the alternative strategy, which some of the party had already suggested: that of capturing the Cacique. On the other hand, the latter was the only one who could lend them any help at that time.

But as soon as they had him in their power, a new deception took them by surprise. The Indian leader's subjects were sure that the French planned to kill Utina because of his earlier betrayal. They therefore barely offered anything for him and lost no time in choosing another leader. They could not think what to do, nor was there any other alternative. Meanwhile their condition was worsening considerably. «This misery became so great that we even found one of our party rummaging in rubbish heaps, collecting the fish bones so as to dry and then grind them and then to make bread out of them»<sup>5</sup>.

At that time millet was becoming ripe for cutting and the French moved from one place to another looking for it without however managing to gather much. On arriving at one particular cultivated site, they found that the grain had already been harvested by the Indians. Further on, they came to a place (near the river Iracana) where, for the first time in many months, the Indians agreed to provide them with grain and provisions. This allowed them to start work on the construction of their ships once again, with renewed strength. They had to work rapidly for the stormy season was practically upon them and

<sup>5</sup> M. Basanier, *op. cit.*, 1586. The second journey of the French to Florida.

if they did not leave Florida before it came, they would not have reserves to wait for another such opportunity.

On the 3rd of August 1565, they made out some sails in the distance. Though they might have been Spanish, the sighting caused great joy <sup>6</sup>. The ships turned out to belong to the Englishman, John Hawkins, who had approached the coast in search of fresh water. When he found these men in so pitiful a condition, he offered to take them to France. This generous offer was their only way out. Laudonnière however was suspicious and refused to accept the offer <sup>7</sup>. But pressed by his men and fearing another insurrection, Laudonnière decided to buy one of Hawkins' ships, some boots, clothes, rigging etc, which would be mainly paid for on his return to France. With his honour saved, on the 15th of August 1565, they were ready to set off. They remained only until they agreed that the winds were favourable.

#### FRANCE AND SPAIN LYING IN WAIT

Pedro Menéndez had hoped that his voyage would be shrouded in the greatest possible secrecy so as not to alert the French. Evidently this was practically impossible: the two Crowns observed each other far too closely for an activity of this kind to go unnoticed by their neighbour. Coligny had gathered that Spain was organizing a new expedition to Florida and, on this occasion in particular, the fundamental objective, perhaps the only one, was to rout the French. He thus immediately set about sending reinforcements to Fort Carolina. He had unbounded confidence in Laudonnière even if there were tendentious rumours in the air about him. It was clear that he needed help and this new voyage (the third) was for that reason urgent and necessary. He re-appointed Jean Ribault as captain, the latter having already returned to France <sup>8</sup>.

Spain was also alert to these French manoeuvres. At the beginning of April 1565, the Spanish ambassador in France, Alava, told the King

<sup>6</sup> M. Basanier, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

<sup>7</sup> G. Fairbanks, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

<sup>8</sup> They had been detained in England by Queen Elizabeth.



in detail about the preparations which were being undertaken to send Captain Jean Ribault to assist Laudonnière. This information was highly alarming. Philip II therefore consulted one of his most experienced advisers in European affairs, Don Francisco Álvarez de Toledo, Duke of Alba and Viceroy of Naples, who had expelled the French from Italy and who had been active in pressuring Catherine of Medici to expel the Huguenots from France.

Alba believed that they ought to prepare a further expedition to Florida as soon as possible. At the same time he recommended holding an audience with the Queen (the protectress, Catherine of Medici), using Isabel de Valois and other royal officials as spokesmen<sup>9</sup>. This audience would take place in Bayonne, where the Queen would be going the following month of June 1565<sup>10</sup>. So finally, Philip II sent his ambassador Alava and the Duke of Alba to talk to the Queen with instructions to make it clear how disgusted and how astonished the Spanish monarch had been to hear of the French activity in Florida, and particularly so seeing that he was married to the French princess, an act that had been performed specifically so that the two royal honours would watch over the Catholic faith in Europe together. In any case, the monarch's orders to his representatives were categorical. If he had known that Ribault had already set off, he would not have arranged the interview with the Queen, for he was convinced that «the matter would be resolved more efficiently on the battle lines in Florida than by words in Bayonne»<sup>11</sup>. In fact, Jean Ribault had already embarked (he did so on the 9th of May 1565), and even though the meeting took place, the discussion dwelt more on religious issues than on Florida.

Anyway, Philip II did not want to break his supposedly cordial relations with the Queen, who was doubtless more preoccupied with keeping the peace in her own country than in preserving the Catholic union with the Spanish King. She was however aware that the Spanish King's diplomatic courtesy was only put on for appearances and that he was quite prepared to take extreme measures if need be. In this

<sup>9</sup> Isabel de Valois was Philip II's third wife and daughter of Catherine de Medici and Henry II.

<sup>10</sup> Ch. Lowery Woodbury, *op. cit.*, tome II, chap. VI, p. 106.

<sup>11</sup> Ch. Lowery Woodbury, *op. cit.*, tome II, chap. VI, p. 110.

respect, the French ambassador in Spain, Fourquevaux, had warned the Queen (having been informed by Isabel de Valois) that the French ships should go well prepared for warfare. Isabel was certain that her husband would never allow the French to settle there<sup>12</sup>.

Such was Coligny's confidence that this time he would be able to establish a French settlement in the New World, that apart from the vast numbers of ships and sailors involved, a large number of French noblemen also volunteered to take part on this expedition. They were to take the responsibility of organizing all the administration and the political life that he expected would need sorting out.

So both France and Spain had picked men who they considered to be supremely able, Jean Ribault and Pedro Menéndez de Avilés; they were given similar instructions. Philip II instructed his Adelantado in the following way: «You should explore and colonize Florida, and if you find forts there, inhabited either by privateers or by representatives of other European states, throw them out»<sup>13</sup>. Meanwhile, Jean Ribault had the following order from Coligny: «Do not let Menéndez encroach upon you, any more than he would let you encroach upon him»<sup>14</sup>. It was not to be an accidental conflict then; both were looking for the other, aware that the establishment of one side would imply the ousting of the other. Neither was prepared to take up the losing role lightly. The two countries were gripped by the events in Florida and their rulers knew that not only was the future of Florida at stake, but also that of peace in Europe. However, the encounter between Pedro Menéndez and Ribault would be a highly personal contest, a contest between two individuals who happened to coincide in Florida and whose monarchs were far away from the scene of the combat.

<sup>12</sup> Ch. Lowery Woodbury, *op. cit.*, tome II, chap. VI, p. 115.

<sup>13</sup> A. Manucy, *Florida's Menéndez. Captain General of the Ocean Sea*, Florida, 1983, p. 27.

<sup>14</sup> A. Manucy, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

## VI

### THE MENÉNDEZ DE AVILÉS CLAN IN FLORIDA

Pedro Menéndez wanted to get to Florida as soon as possible. He had anyway to fulfil his agreement with the King<sup>1</sup>, by which he was obliged to have everything ready for embarking by the month of May 1565. Immediately after signing his "Asiento" (on the 20th of March 1565), he began to organize his fleet, and so as to accelerate the painfully slow business transactions, he did so at three different places on the peninsula: in Asturias, Vizcaya and Cádiz. At the head of the two fleet that were being organized in the North, he put Esteban de las Alas, while he took charge of the one in Cádiz, from where they would all be leaving together.

Again he ran up against the "Casa de Contratación", which was always changing its attitude towards him; not only did they harrass him, they created obstacles in all the business he had to arrange. They refused to give him the money that had been agreed to finance the voyage. When they were forced to do so, they delayed for as long as they could. They regularly denied him the licences that he needed and they did not forward the salaries or the weapons intended for the troops<sup>2</sup>. Though in the end all matters were resolved, it did paralyse the organization of the voyage, and indeed postpone the departure date. They even kept some of his private money, for they had not

<sup>1</sup> M. del Vas Mingo, *op. cit.*, p. 405. Pedro Menéndez de Avilés' "Asiento", introduction by King Philip II.

<sup>2</sup> E. Ruidíaz Caravia, *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 60-66, First appendix: Pedro Menéndez's letter to the King, Sevilla, 18th May, 1565. E. Ruidíaz Caravia, *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 66-70, First appendix: Pedro Menéndez's letter to the King, Sevilla, 28th May, 1565.

returned the sum of 20,000 ducats which they had taken from him and his brother when they were thrown into the prison. The shadow that the "Casa de Contratación" cast over Pedro Menéndez did not even disappear when the latter, exhausted by the lack of resources and the slow pace that things were going, saw it necessary to turn to his family and his friends. The latter fully trusted in the future Adelantado. They demonstrated how concerned they were at the shameful way the "Casa de Contratación" was treating him; they suspected that if such a lofty organization was not giving him any assistance, even after the expedition had set off, they would probably not be able to recover their own loans. In this situation Menéndez found it practically impossible to collect sufficient money. He thus found himself obliged to buy most things on credit, paying much more for them than if he had acquired them in cash.

The officials at the "Casa de Contratación" also knew that if these obstacles were to impede Menéndez from having everything ready to embark at the end of May, he would then have to pay a fine which consisted in returning the 1,500 ducats that had been conceded in the "Asiento" for the purposes of feeding the royal troops<sup>3</sup>. As a sailor, Menéndez knew that if the delay continued, they would put to sea in the stormy season and the men would be fearful and might even desert before leaving Spain. It should be pointed out however that he did not actually have problems recruiting men for the enterprise, for the idea of going to Florida, which earlier expeditions had described as a marvelous place, together with the challenge of fighting heresy, and the prestige of its organizer, meant that the prospect was sufficiently attractive.

The religious side of the expedition would suffer reversals. In spite of the fact that the monarch allowed him to take Jesuit monks with him, a series of delays in the preparation for their voyage made it impossible for them to be present on the day of departure. This greatly displeased the Adelantado. Since he could not get the Jesuits he wanted to come, he decided to set off with three secular Fathers. The Chaplain was Francisco López de Mendoza Grajales, who would become one of

<sup>3</sup> M. del Vas Mingo, *op. cit.*, p. 408. Pedro Menéndez de Avilés' "Asiento", paragraph 12.

the chroniclers of the journey, Rodrigo García Trujillo and Pedro Rueda<sup>4</sup>. The foundation of the first parish in the city of San Agustín would be their responsibility, and this came to be the first, enduring, Christian base in Florida.

As soon as all his fleet were ready, he set off impatiently from the port of Cádiz on the 29th of June 1565, without waiting for the squadron from Asturias and Vizcaya, who would meet them later in the Canaries. The naval forces were made up of one of the King's galleons, one of Pedro Menéndez's, the *San Pelayo*, the launches the *Magdalena* the *San Miguel*, the *San Andrés*, and *La Concepción*, the galley the *Victoria*, the brigantine *Esperanza*, the caravels *San Antonio* and *Nuestra Señora del Rosario*. These craft were home to some one thousand individuals, all of whom were in the direct charge of the Adelantado, except for three hundred soldiers who were employed by the Crown<sup>5</sup>.

Afterwards the fleet of Vizcaya and Asturias would set off on their own at the command of Esteban de las Alas and Pedro Menéndez Márquez respectively with a total of three hundred people in five ships. They had to meet with the rest of the fleet in the Canaries or otherwise to follow the orders which the Adelantado had left there for them. In fact the expedition had cost the Crown 6,630,622 maravedis which were distributed in the following manner: artillery, 54,576 maravedis; munitions, 1,719,471 maravedis; lesser arms, 19,334 maravedis; anticipated salaries, 1,084,706 maravedis; and for the hire of the boats and others, 1,153,983 maravedis<sup>6</sup>. On the 9th of May 1565, the Crown sent an order to Santo Domingo so that when Menéndez arrived, he would have men and provisions prepared. These costs which amounted to what had been agreed in the "Asiento" once again underline the Crown's serious interest in this enterprise. The prestige of the Spanish Crown was at stake, not just in the New World but in the old world too. This surpassed the already important aim of discovering and conquering new territory.

From what I have mentioned above about the family life of Pedro Menéndez, the reader could well have formed a clear impression of a

<sup>4</sup> M.V. Gannon, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

<sup>5</sup> E. Ruidíaz Caravía, *op. cit.*, vol. I, chap. IX, pp. 61-62.

<sup>6</sup> P. Hoffman, *op. cit.*, p. 256.

man abandoning his home at fourteen years of age. It might thus seem that he was detached, lacking in personal affection, and that he had little sense of the family. After all, he rarely returned home. It might look as if he did not fulfil his responsibilities as husband and father. Indeed, one might infer from his numerous voyages to far-off lands, that he had forgotten his «*patria chica*» as well as his Asturian countrymen.

On the contrary, none of this concurs with the real Pedro Menéndez who brought almost all his relations to Florida (the great dream of his lifetime), and offered them top ranking civil and military posts and other great responsibilities. Almost every branch of his family had one of its members in office there. It was the same with his countrymen: Menéndez repeatedly asked the King to take Asturians to Florida, arguing that he wanted to have complete family networks there; he knew these people very well and knew what good farmers they were. After his first voyage (in 1565), when he began to have problems recruiting personnel for Florida, he persuaded Philip II that the enterprise would be easier if he was amongst his own countrymen, because of the trust and affection that he knew they would have for him<sup>7</sup>.

The Adelantado did not simply want to install the Asturians in high political and administrative offices, but he seriously wished to create a stable and durable community there. To achieve this, he dedicated all his efforts from the day he began to prepare his first journey (in 1565). At this early stage, he already included a considerable number of northerners and relations, among them Solís de Meras<sup>8</sup>, Diego Flores de Valdés<sup>9</sup>, Esteban de las Alas<sup>10</sup> and Pedro

<sup>7</sup> His petitions in this respect were finally satisfied with the Royal Warrant that was conceded to Menéndez in Madrid on the 3rd of March 1573. In this way, he was given permission to send fifty Asturian families to La Florida. A.C.R., leg. 2, n.º 5, A. 6, n.º 15.

<sup>8</sup> Solís de Meras was a brother-in-law of the Adelantado's. He was also a nephew by marriage via his wife Francisca de Quirós, who was a niece of Pedro Menéndez. Archive of the Counts of Revillagigedo, leg. 9.

<sup>9</sup> Diego Flores de Valdés was nephew of Pedro Menéndez's by his marriage to Catherine Menéndez de Avilés y Marqués, daughter of the Adelantado's brother, Alvar Sánchez de Avilés and the marquess of Valdés.

<sup>10</sup> Esteban de las Alas was a kinsman to Pedro Menéndez because he was a brother



Menéndez Márquez<sup>11</sup>. All of these came to occupy grand posts in the Navy and in Florida once they were established there. The conquest of Florida became a family or an Asturian achievement, at whose head was Pedro Menéndez. Not even the loss of his only son Juan, in the waters of the New World dampened his enthusiasm for conquest. If he had no more sons to leave the enterprise to, the honourable mission would be taken on by his nephews<sup>12</sup>.

Of all the relations who accompanied Menéndez, the longest-serving was his brother-in-law, Solís de Meras. Thanks to him, we have been able to glimpse the details of the journey fairly precisely through the pages of his diary which he wrote during the voyages and the events that they lived through. It is not the only narrative of the facts, but it is the longest and most complete of those we have access to today.

The Adelantado gave his family all the offices, titles and sinecures which fell into his hands. He granted them much greater power than that specified in the "Asiento", but he insisted that the Crown acknowledge this, as for example when he wrote to the monarch:

Diego Flores de Valdés has spent fifteen years in the Navy under my charge and he has always served very well and very carefully. He is today my lieutenant, and Your Majesty has given him no thanks nor assistance.<sup>13</sup>

One of the goals written out in the "Asiento" with the Crown was the construction of at least three fortresses as a symbol of the Spanish presence there<sup>14</sup>. The Adelantado also chose to leave members of his family in these places: Bartolomé Menéndez (his brother), stayed as Alcaide of the fort at San Agustín, and Esteban de las Alas would have

of Hernando de las Alas, the second husband of Catherine Menéndez, Pedro's daughter, who had first been married to Hernando de Miranda.

<sup>11</sup> Pedro Menéndez Márquez was a nephew of Pedro Menéndez's because he was the son of María Alonso de Arango (Pedro's sister) and of Alonso Márquez.

<sup>12</sup> See appendix VI for Pedro Menéndez's family tree.

<sup>13</sup> L. Tormo Sanz, *Siete cartas al rey por el General Menéndez de Avilés, desde el 13 de agosto de 1565 al 30 de enero siguiente*, Madrid, 1958, vol. II, pp. 899-943. See the letter from San Agustín dated the 15th October 1565.

<sup>14</sup> Pedro Menéndez de Avilés' "Asiento", paragraph 5.



the same office at San Felipe (Santa Elena). Esteban de las Alas then became lieutenant of all the lands, a position which made him into one of Menéndez's most trusted men. But Pedro Menéndez Márquez was the one most dear to him, and he made him Captain General of Florida and Governor of Havana <sup>15</sup>.

Another of his kin to occupy an important role in Florida was Diego de Velasco, husband of Menéndez's illegitimate daughter, María Menéndez de Avilés. De Velasco had always accompanied him from his first voyage and he would be Governor between 1571 and 1576. He was the illegitimate son of Don Juan de Velasco and he took his father-in-law's position on several occasions when the latter had to be absent. In spite of the great responsibility which weighed on him, he was accused of embezzling funds. He was then stripped of all his offices and obliged to leave the Indies for a period of two years.

All the relations would in fact come up against problems of this kind, even though once the long trials and reports were done with, they would eventually come out of the episode with flying colours, and would return again to occupy outstanding positions. In the case of Velasco, for example, not long after his lawsuit in Florida, he was named "Alguacil Mayor" of Mexico and was even appointed gentleman of the "Casa del Rey" <sup>16</sup>. This was not the only case. Pedro de Valdés, after his experience in Florida, went on to New Spain. One can see how often Florida served as a spring board from which to gain access to positions in other areas of the New World.

<sup>15</sup> Codoinao, tome 14, p. 265.

<sup>16</sup> J.F. Schwaller, «Nobility, family and service: Menéndez de Avilés and his men», *The Florida Historical Quarterly*, Tampa, June, 1988, p. 304.

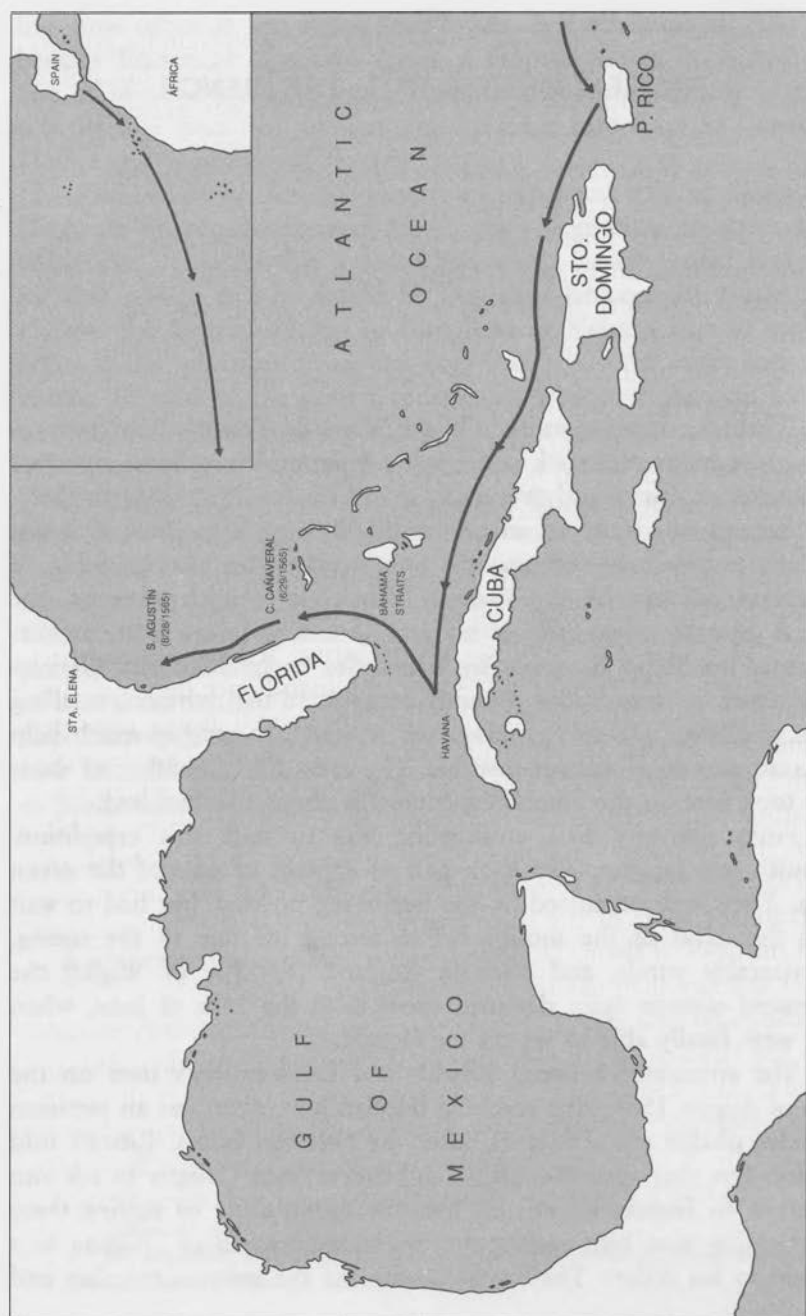
## VII

### FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH THE FRENCH

While the amazing attitude of the "Casa de Contratación" towards Pedro Menéndez managed to delay his departure from Spain by more than a month (he would eventually do so on the 29th of June 1565), Jean Ribault was ready to set off by the 10th of May 1565. It is not precisely known how many people were involved on his expedition. If one takes account of the various French or Spanish versions, the official Spanish view (the latter was generally taken from reports presented to Philip II, either by Menéndez or by Mendoza Grajales chaplain of the expedition) certainly exaggerated the numbers, totalling them at 1,500, so as to encourage the monarch to send as much help and resources to Florida as possible. The most likely number of those who took part on the French expedition is about five hundred.

From the very first, misfortune was to stalk this expedition. Ribault's son Jacques, also took part as captain of one of the seven ships. They were organized by the beginning of May, but had to wait until the 22nd of the month before setting off due to the strong, unfavourable winds, and once in England (the Isle of Wight) the inclement climate again detained them until the 14th of June, when they were finally able to set off for Florida.

The encounter between Ribault and Laudonnière's men on the 29th of August 1565, after reaching the San Juan river, was an occasion of indescribable joy. However, after the first few hours, Ribault told Laudonnière that even though he had orders from Coligny to ask him to return to France, he offered him the opportunity of staying there and fighting with him against the Spaniards, instead of obliging him to bow to his orders. They would carry out the mission together and



Pedro Menéndez de Avilés' arrival in Florida

would share the triumph. Though Laudonnière was profoundly grieved by the unfavourable reports that had reached France about his ability to lead, and which Ribault passed on to him, he was persuaded to accept Ribault's generous proposal. Nevertheless he had no time to put such a proposal into effect: his weak health failed him once again, with repeated outbursts of serious fever.

Pedro Menéndez finally left the port of Cádiz on the 29th of June 1565, in the direction of the Canaries, where he found the fleet of Esteban de Alas of three ships with two hundred and fifty-seven people on board, and that of Pedro Menéndez Márquez with two ships and seventy-eight on board. From there they all set off together, though stayed together for only a short time. Surprised by a terrific tempest, the ships of Esteban de las Alas were separated from the rest of the group and the Adelantado, because of the fear of shipwreck, ordered his men to throw all their personal belongings into the sea. This caused obvious displeasure.

In spite of the fact that his intention had been to head straight for Santo Domingo to collect all that had been prepared by Royal Mandate, Menéndez was informed, on his arrival at Puerto Rico, that Ribault was ahead of him. So after entrusting Juan Ponce de León, the accountant on the island, to send all the ships as well as any message or dispatch to Havana, he set off immediately for Florida. This decision vexed the officials of the "Audiencia" of Santo Domingo, which was only natural, after the enormous effort they had made to gather together the additional supplies which had cost them a total of 17.429.795 maravedis<sup>1</sup>. These circumstances must also have upset the Adelantado, for some of the ships had disappeared earlier on, and he still had no news of them. Doubtless he deemed the time factor to be of greater urgency than the number of soldiers.

In the midst of a great torment on the 26th of August, they passed through the Bahama Straits. Meanwhile they prepared for their arrival in Florida. The captains of the different ships collected all their weapons together so that once they were shared amongst the soldiers they should be in clean and working order. Also they began training, and given that many of them had never laid their hands on a weapon

<sup>1</sup> P. Hoffman, *op. cit.*, p. 256.

before, each soldier shot three shots once a day, so that they would lose the sense of fear it gave. They even tried to encourage their sense of competition by handing out prizes to those who shot most accurately and to their captains. As well as praying for a safe arrival, this is how they spent much of their time (when the storms allowed them that is) until Tuesday the 28th of August 1565, the day of San Agustín, when they saw the land of Florida for the first time.

Back in Spain Philip II, who was Menéndez's only main support, had not been able to keep calm after the first fleet had been sent. So hardly had it set out than he ordered Captain Sancho de Archineaga and one thousand, eight hundred soldiers to reinforce the expedition<sup>2</sup>. In spite of the urgency, the problems of organization had delayed its departure until the 13th of April 1565. Without stopping at Santo Domingo, it arrived in Florida on the 29th of August 1565. This expedition, financed by the Crown and by the "Casa de Contratación", had cost some 34.620.852 maravedis<sup>3</sup>.

Menéndez's men were not entirely sure where they were, even though they were more concerned that they did not know where the French were, and were worried lest they surprise them at any moment. They continued along the coast in search of a particular harbour which some reports that they had with them recommended as to be the soundest. But after a number of days sailing they had not managed to find it. They decided to send some men onto the mainland to see if the Indians could give them any information about the exact location of this harbour. The Indians proved amicable from the start, and explained that there was a safe port if they headed north. The Spaniards thanked them with many gifts and headed for the port, which would latterly be known as San Agustín.

On the 5th of September 1565, they saw the sails of the French ships, which were closing in on them, and they even came into close contact with them. According to the memoirs of M. Basanier, the Spaniards had been well informed from Spain and so called them by their own names. The mistrust was mutual, and the French party was reduced since the majority had been left on the mainland. They

<sup>2</sup> P. Hoffman, *op. cit.*, p. 257.

<sup>3</sup> P. Hoffman, *op. cit.*, p. 258.

therefore decided to get away as soon as they could. Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, on observing their movements, advanced towards them and said:

Señores, where does this Navy come from? Only one man answered, that it came from France. He then asked them: What is it doing here? They replied: —we are bringing infantry, artillery and provisions for a fort which the French King has in these lands and for others that he is going to build. The Adelantado said to them —Are you Catholic or Lutheran and who is your General?— They answered that all of them were Lutheran and that their General was Juan Ribault, and they then asked who they were themselves. The Adelantado responded: He to whom you are taking is known as Pedro Menéndez de Avilés and this Navy belongs to the King of Spain, and I am its General, and I have come here to hang and behead all the Lutherans who I find on these shores and in these seas. Such is the instruction I have from my King, and I will fulfil his orders shortly; I will go to your ships, and if I find any Catholic there, I will treat him well<sup>4</sup>.

The Spaniards did not want to lose this opportunity to have a head on battle with the French. The positions, as we have seen, were sufficiently clear; so they took the decision to use their artillery immediately. Soon they had to change their opinion, for they were in pitch darkness, and they did not want to risk everything at this stage. When the French boats were seen to sail faster than their own, partly because they had no cargo on board making them lighter, they decided to withdraw.

Once Ribault was told of these events by his men, he began to realise how enormous his risk had been to leave his ships without adequate protection at the mercy of any attack. From then on, he decided that all encounters with the Spaniards should be at sea, for he now knew that his ships were faster and this seemed to be the only advantage that he was so far aware of. With this idea in mind, he decided to go in search of the enemy. Laudonnière, however, argued otherwise; if they were to put to sea, Fort Carolina would be defenceless to any possible attack. But taking no notice, Ribault put to

<sup>4</sup> E. Ruidíaz Caravia, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 77.

sea on the 8th of September 1565 in the midst of a violent storm which seemed an ill omen. It was now too late to follow Laudonnière's advice who lay ill with very few soldiers (he had even taken Laudonnière's with him)<sup>5</sup>. Meanwhile, convinced that the Spaniards could turn up at any moment, they began to reinforce the fort with the help of the depleted troops that remained.

#### FOUNDATION OF SAN AGUSTÍN

On returning from the port after the first encounter with the French on the 8th of September, the Spaniards could feel optimistic. They sang the *Te Deum*, they nailed a cross into the earth and the Adelantado, to the curiosity of a crowd of Indians who had approached, took possession of the land in the name of the Spanish King. They called the port San Agustín, and it stands now as the oldest city what is now the USA. This was a turning point of great interest to the Crown, who knew, from experience, that

the work of almost all the Spanish conquistadors was linked to the foundation of a city, and there can be little doubt that the cultural, administrative and religious activity of Spain radiated out from these urban centres<sup>6</sup>.

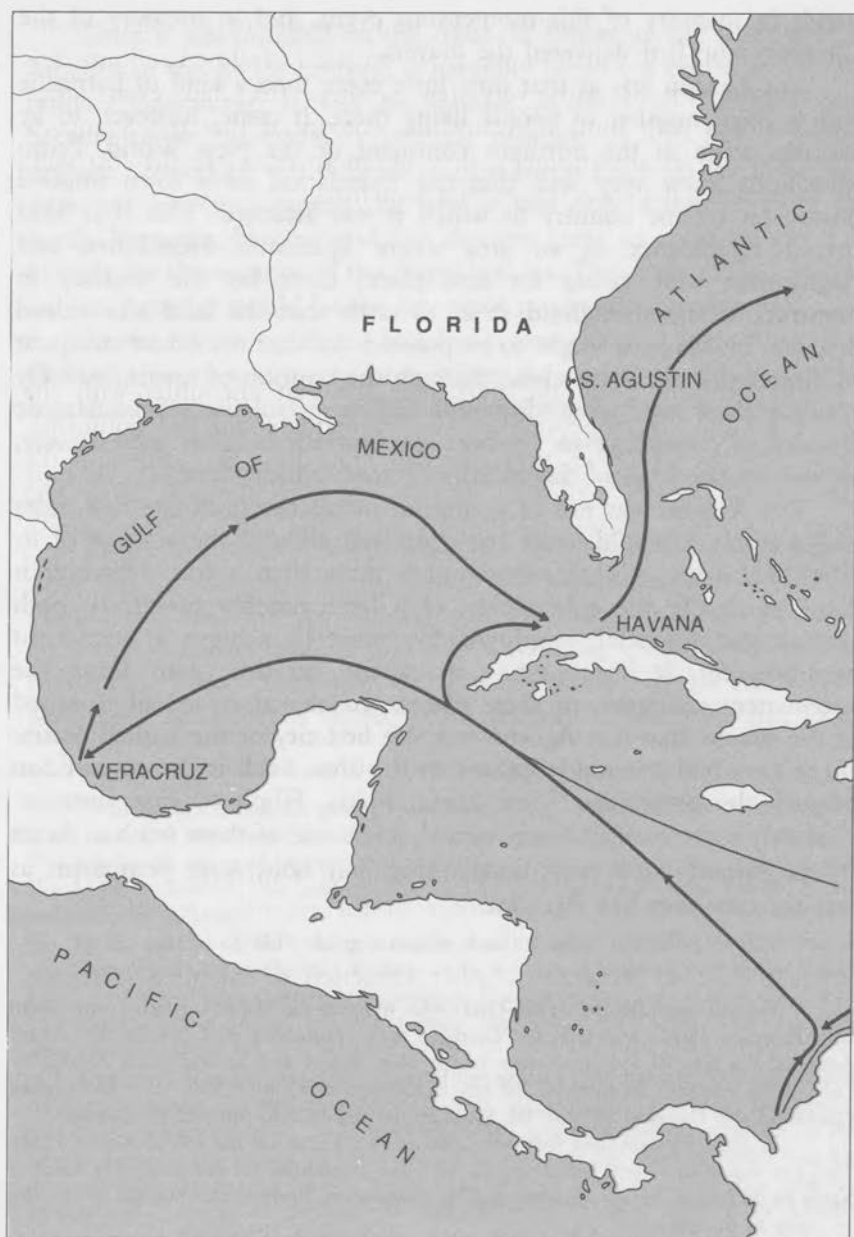
Menéndez knew that the foundation of a mission in this place was vital to guarantee the existence of the recently created Spanish colony. This mission was called «Nombre de Dios»<sup>7</sup> and in it the Chaplain of the expedition, Father Francisco de Mendoza Grajales, celebrated the first mass in this new Spanish base. He doubtless prayed for the apparently impossible: to settle themselves in that hostile land. In this way Catholicism was born in the northern part of America. On the exact spot, a monument, unveiled on the 13th of April 1958,

<sup>5</sup> M. Basanier, *op. cit.*, Third voyage, p. 720.

<sup>6</sup> J. Vicens Vives, *Historia General Moderna*, Barcelona, 1971, tome I, p. 224.

<sup>7</sup> In this place, one can still find the hermitage of «Our Lady of the Milk» who is much venerated by many US citizens.





Location of San Agustín

stands in memory of this momentous event, and in memory of the Chaplain who first delivered the prayers.

San Agustín was at that time little more than a kind of barricade with a small number of people living there. It came, however, to be the first town in the northern continent of the New World. Pedro Menéndez knew very well that the foundation of a town implied possession by the country to which it was attached. This thus held special significance in an area where Spaniards, Frenchmen and Englishmen were racing for first place; there lay the urgency in constructing the stronghold so as to ratify that the land was indeed Spanish. However, it ought to be pointed out that the future conquest of Florida did not come about through the creation of towns, basically because there was no a dispersed Indian population. Sebastián de Benalcázar<sup>8</sup>, speaking to Jiménez de Quesada<sup>9</sup>, often used to say, «towns are the basis of the security of acquired kingdoms».

San Agustín was not of course an urban centre of the first order and possibly it would never have survived without the courage of its first inhabitants; it represented much more than a fort. However it came to signify the culmination of a large number of efforts, both human and financial, employed by Spain to achieve a permanent establishment. It is interesting to expand on this point about the «permanent character» of these places, for objections are often raised at the notion that San Agustín was the first city of the United States: other forts had previously existed in the area. Such is the case of San Miguel de Guadalupe<sup>10</sup> or Santa María Filipina<sup>11</sup> for instance. Certainly such establishments existed, and some of them (such as Santa María Filipina) were fairly long-lasting, but none were permanent as was the case with San Agustín.

<sup>8</sup> Spanish conquistador (1480-1551) who went to the Indies (Darién-Puerto Rico) with Pedrarias Dávila and later to Nicaragua with Hernández de Córdoba. He always defended the idea of founding cities in the New World and he was made Alcaide de León. With Almagro, he founded the city of Santiago de Quito (1534). Later he founded Guayaquil and Cali and he took the Santa Fe de Bogotá with Jiménez de Quesada.

<sup>9</sup> In 1537, he coincided with Sebastián de Benalcázar (on the 6th of August 1538). This city would be where Bartolomé de las Casas celebrated his first mass. He called it Santa Fe de Bogotá because it reminded his companion, Jiménez de Quesada, of the city of Santa Fe in Granada.

<sup>10</sup> San Miguel de Guadalupe was constructed by Vázquez de Ayllón in 1526.

<sup>11</sup> Santa María Filipina was built by Tristán de Luna in 1559.

Since it was installed on the coast (as almost all the cities were in America in the XVIth century) it naturally became a centre of Spanish military operations. It was maintained, in spite of the high cost, because of its extraordinary strategic position. It also had a natural defence network; it was difficult to gain access from sea for those who were not hardened experts; by land it was only accessible from the north. Veracruz, Havana and San Agustín came to make up the vital triangle for the security of the Spanish ships. The castle of San Marcos (at San Agustín) would be the key piece in the defence system <sup>12</sup>.

At the beginning, Pedro Menéndez thought that Santa Elena (fort of San Felipe) would be the best site for the capital of Florida, but this would not always be the case. Continuous attacks from Indians on this new city led to it being abandoned for two years (1576-1578) and again in 1587. Only from that latter date, did San Agustín come to be the Spanish capital of Florida.

In his absences, the Adelantado was always careful to leave behind some of his closest relations whom he had brought with him in Florida, as "Alcaides" of San Agustín, by which they even had the authority to collect taxes. In order of succession, these were Bartolomé Menéndez, Pedro Menéndez de Valdés, Esteban de las Alas, Pedro Menéndez de Avilés *el Mozo*, Pedro Menéndez Márquez and Diego

<sup>12</sup> In 1586, the English pirate, Francis Drake (in 1688, John Davis was to do the same), attacked the city of San Agustín destroying and burning practically everything. The inhabitants returned however, and built their houses anew. It was urged that a fort should be constructed that could not be burned and destroyed by the enemy, be they westerners or Indians.

By the middle of 1669, using a marine material called «coquina», a stone fort was constructed (the first in Florida). It came to be a prime defensive factor in the Bahama canal, and of exceptional strategic importance. For this reason, San Marcos, for thus the new fort was called, became one of the main objectives of the English, who were always after strategic places.

They tried to attack it in 1702, they set fire to it in 1740 but they were unsuccessful on both occasions. San Agustín and Florida were Spanish until 1763, when an agreement (the Peace of Paris) granted the English what they had been unable to obtain by force of arms. Spain gave Florida to Great Britain in exchange for Havana, which had been conquered by the English (in the Seven Years War of 1761, in which they took both Manila and Havana). At the Peace of Versailles in 1783, after the War of American Independence, England recognized the independence of the United States of America and Spain recovered Florida, which would be Spanish again until 1819, when it was finally ceded to the United States of America.

Velasco. Menéndez did not wish to leave this important town in the hands of someone he did not have complete confidence in and above all who did not represent the family interests that he had in Florida.

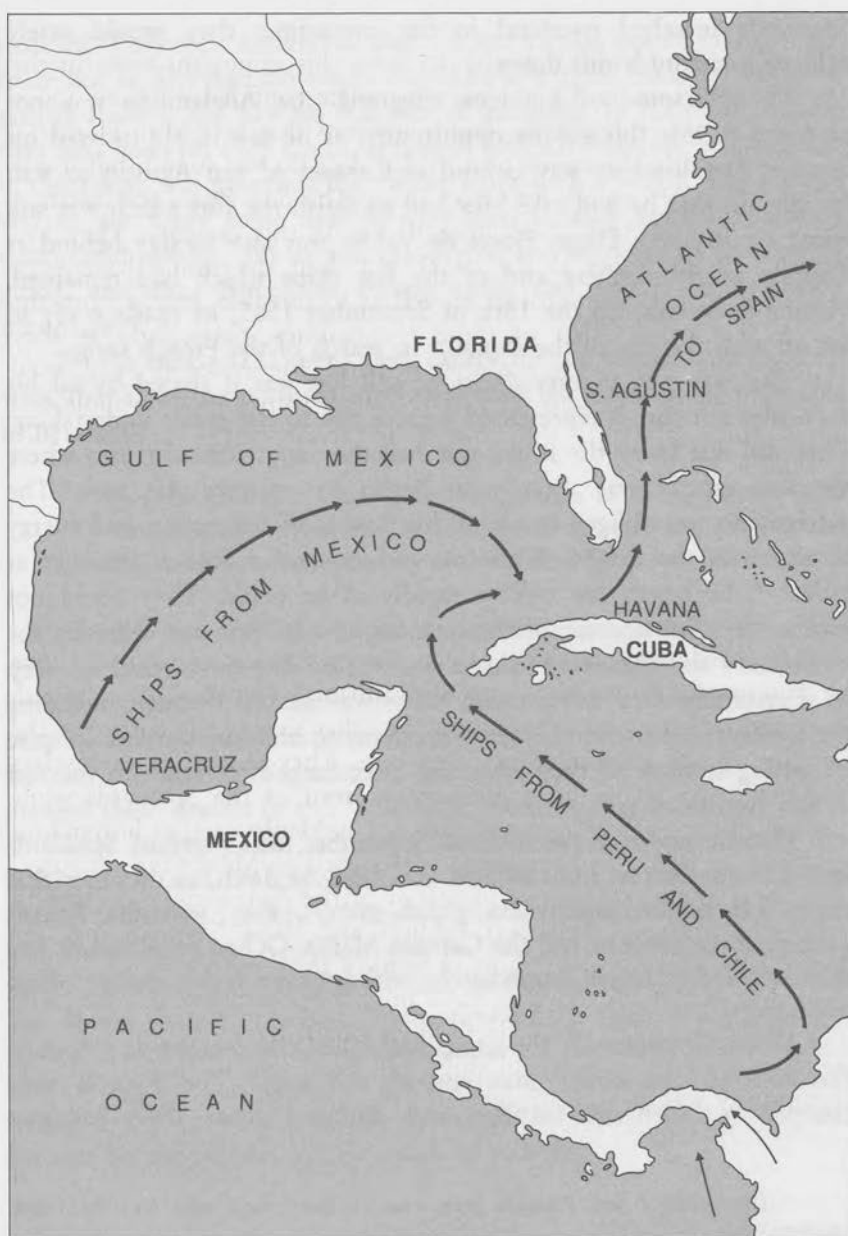
The recently christened port of San Agustín was sound, but it was not in fact deep enough for larger ships. The *San Pelayo* for instance, captained by the Adelantado himself, was in this category. They had intended to berth her in the canal, but then she would have been vulnerable to persistent storms as well as to possible attacks from the French. To avoid either of these eventualities, particularly as they suspected that the enemy was close at hand, Menéndez decided, even before unloading them, to send all the larger ships to La Española and Puerto Rico (Darién), with orders to return with supplies (10th September 1565).

#### THE TAKING OF FORT CAROLINA

The Adelantado had not been mistaken in taking these precautions, for only a few hours later Ribault's French ships appeared. They had reckoned on mooring on the other side of the barrier of the bay for fear of encountering some trap. They displayed themselves menacingly by taking up a position in front of the Spaniards while waiting for the Spaniards to respond. But suddenly another horrendous storm struck down, and this was to lend itself to Menéndez's strategy.

The French had set out in search of the Spaniards, expecting to meet and confront their best soldiers and ships<sup>13</sup>, which logically should have been those bobbing in front of them on the waves. It then seemed to Menéndez that this was a unique opportunity, not for going into battle with the enemy fleet which would have been unthinkable seeing as their most powerful ships had been sent to the islands; the opportunity was to take advantage of the likely defencelessness at Fort Carolina. As long as the French sailors struggled in the howling storm, they would not be able to return to their fort. This would be for at least another three days. The fortress would thus be unprotected. If the

<sup>13</sup> It was later known that four hundred soldiers and two hundred sailors travelled in the ships.



San Agustín in the "Golden triangle" with Havana and Veracruz

Spaniards marched overland in the meantime, they would surely achieve a victory hands down.

Though some of his men objected, the Adelantado was not prepared to lose this golden opportunity, as he saw it. He ordered his brother Bartolomé to stay behind as Captain of San Agustín to wait for the aid that he had asked for and to finish the fort which was still being constructed. Diego Flores de Valdés was also to stay behind as Captain of the artillery and of the few ships which had remained. Having done this, on the 18th of September 1565, he made ready to set off with the rest of the captains in search of the French camp.

This was not an easy decision; still less was it shared by all his men who felt that it represented a grave risk to the entire undertaking. They did not know the route, nor had they any particular idea where the fort exactly was. Fear soon began to overtake the men. The Adelantado was obliged to use all his powers of conviction and energy to shut out the doubt. With two Indians and a French prisoner as guides<sup>14</sup>, he began the trek as rapidly as he could. They could not journey too fast because of the quantity of rain that had fallen in the storm; this fact also meant that there was no dry space to sit or sleep in. Everything they carried with them was soaked through including the artillery and the food; they felt exhausted and low-spirited. In spite of getting so close to their objective, they longed to return to the fort at San Agustín.

On the night of the 19th of September, this party of Spaniards found themselves in front of Fort Carolina. At dawn, as they saw that there was hardly anyone on guard even<sup>15</sup>, they sent the French prisoner François Jean and the Captain Martín Ochoa on ahead. It was then decided to attack immediately, without even laying out any kind of strategy.

Once the master of the camp had killed the sentries and opened the fortress, the chaos that ensued was total. The French were completely taken by surprise and emerged from their lodgings

<sup>14</sup> The prisoner was François Jean, one of the rebels who had fled from Laudonnière.

<sup>15</sup> M. Basanier tells us in his narrative that the guards had been told to come off duty precisely because it was thought so unlikely for there to be any attack at that time.

stunned. They were convinced that the war should not be taking place there but in San Agustín where they had sent their troops. They were greatly startled and saw no real way of escaping. In their desperation they fled however they could, and even jumped from the walls which, in the event, was pointless for, falling from such a height, was a grisly way to die. Only some fifty or sixty men actually got away, among them Laudonnière. But he was discovered and reported by the French guide, and thus forced to escape again and shelter in a nearby mountain <sup>16</sup>.

All the others (132 men) died, except for the women and children who, thanks to the personal intervention of the Adelantado were able to be saved:

Then he said in a loud voice: «under pain of death, no one shall wound or kill any woman or child under fifteen years of age»; and thus it happened that seventy of them were taken prisoner instead <sup>17</sup>.

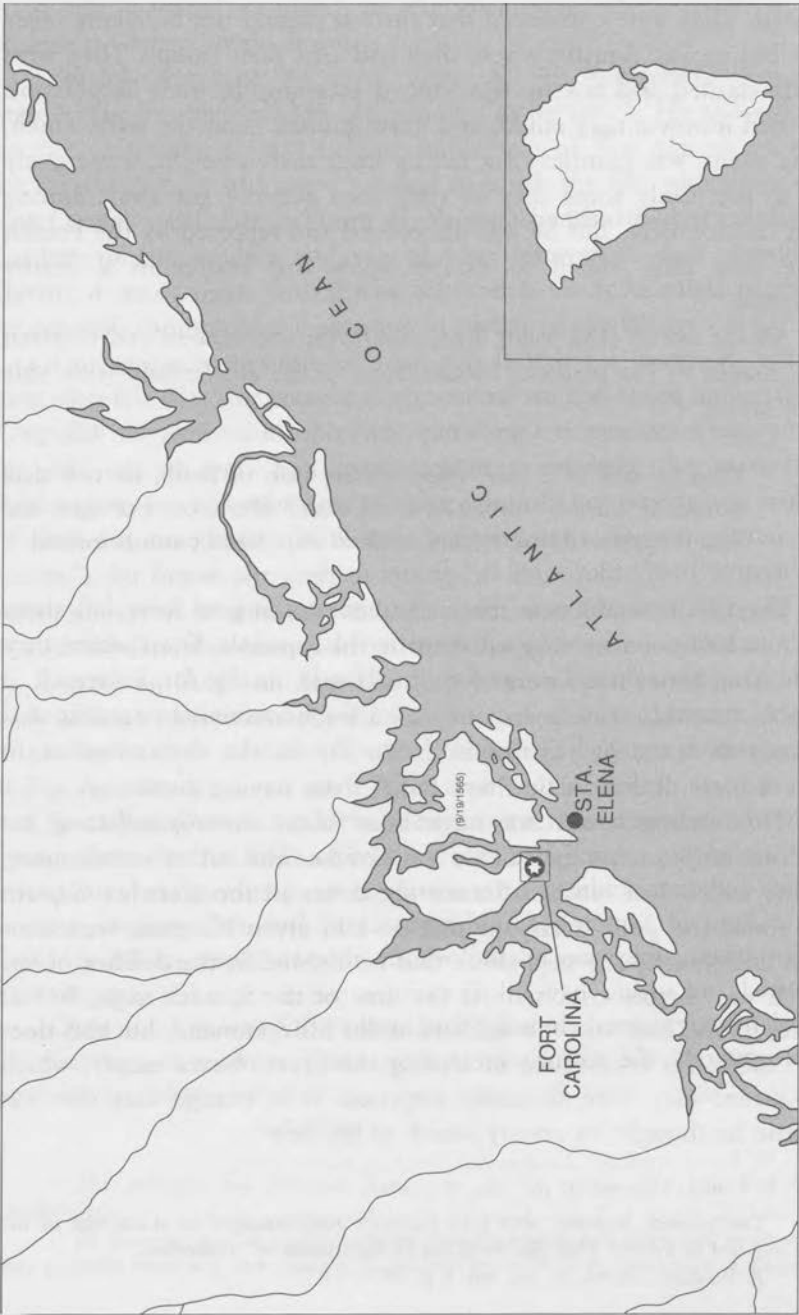
Though it would have been the easiest thing to have left them with the Indians, they shipped them to La Española, from where they were to embark on a course for Sevilla and finally for France. It is possible that this may have partly been for humanitarian reasons, but we may be sure that the main factor lay in the determination to prevent these dealers in the "new faith" from staying there.

This ending could not have been more humiliating for Laudonnière and his expedition to Florida. The rather condemning reports which had reached France about his performance as Captain and about the poor treatment that he had given his men, were now given credence by the negligence that he showed in the defence of the fort. It was sharply criticised. At the time of the Spanish siege, he was in fact ill and had very few soldiers under his command, but this does not explain his confidence in leaving the sentry boxes empty, which had meant they were so easily surprised. It is strange that this was because he thought an enemy attack so unlikely:

<sup>16</sup> Laudonnière, together with Jean Ribault's son, managed to reach one of the ships and fled to France. They got to Wales in the middle of November.

<sup>17</sup> E. Ruidíaz Caravia, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 98.





Location of Fort Carolina. First encounter between Spaniards and Frenchmen

When day broke, seeing that the rain continued more intensely than before, he took pity on the sentry guards who were completely soaked through [La Vigne, the Captain of the look-out squadron on that day], and content in the belief that the Spaniards would not attack on such an unearthly day, he told them to retire<sup>18</sup>.

Once he had finished taking over the fort, Menéndez headed for the French ships that were under Jacques Ribault's command. When he reached them, he hoisted a white flag and asked them to hand themselves over. They refused so he sent the French guide over with a message: he promised that they would be allowed to return to their country with provisions, as well as their women and children; if they still refused to surrender they would kill the lot of them<sup>19</sup>. Ribault's son took no notice of this latest declaration and when the shots began to fire, they set sail immediately. They were not pursued by Menéndez's men, for the latter had limited supplies of munitions and for the time being they were delighting in the conquest of the fort.

The victory had been achieved and with that they forgot their earlier suffering. Profoundly satisfied by these results, Menéndez wrote to the King about these events: «[...] and with no casualties or serious injuries, except for one man who has already recovered, we won the fortress and all that it had inside»<sup>20</sup>.

On the following day, they changed the name of the fortress to San Mateo (whose feast it was on the day of the victory) and Gonzalo de Villarroel was made "Alcaide", and given command of a contingent of three hundred soldiers. After tearing down all the French symbols, on the 22nd of September, under the authority of Captain Francisco de Castañeda, they began the return to San Agustín. They were exhausted and would have liked to have rested for a few days, but a great danger remained. It was thought that the French who had fled would now take the recently created Spanish fort in revenge.

<sup>18</sup> M. Basanier, *op. cit.*, *Landonnière's testimony*, part II, p. 722.

<sup>19</sup> E. Ruidíaz Caravia, *op. cit.*; tome I, p. 99.

<sup>20</sup> A.C.R., leg. 2. L. Tormo Sanz, *Viajes por Norteamérica*, Biblioteca Indiana, tome II, letter from Pedro Menéndez de Avilés to the King from San Agustín on the 18th of October 1565.

They took only thirty-five men, while the rest remained to defend San Mateo. It was logical that when the time allowed, Ribault might return to what he still must have considered his fort. If he learnt what had happened there in the meantime, he would no doubt wish to recover his fortress. Though it was highly probable that there would be a further conflict at San Mateo, the Adelantado had serious problems putting together this small group to accompany him on the return journey. His men protested that they were tired and some were even ill. They just did not have the strength for another journey, and they wanted to stay in one place even if this might only be for a few days at the fort.

The men had reason to fear returning: they had not been long in Florida, but it had been sufficient to show that the adverse climate, both on the mainland and on the sea, was to be their worst enemy. The return journey was even worse than the outward: they walked over land that had been flooded, which meant that they continuously lost their way; practically collapsing with fatigue, they were obliged to cross rivers which had been greatly expanded by the storm rain. Only the satisfaction of being able to tell their companions at San Agustín of the taking of Fort Carolina gave them heart and encouraged them to go on.

On Monday the 24th of September they arrived at San Agustín to great jubilation. The garrison at the fort had been greatly grieved, for some Indians had told them that the entire group that had set off for the French fort had perished. The admiration which this event awoke in the men for Menéndez was reflected in all their diaries and memoirs: «He has demonstrated an ability and an energy that no other man in the world possesses»<sup>21</sup>. They had only just arrived in Florida, but already the first reports that they sent to Spain gave hope that this time things would turn out very differently.

<sup>21</sup> F. de Mendoza Grajales, *Testimonio*, in E. Ruidíaz Caravia, *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 431-465. A.G.I., est. I, leg. 1-19.

## VIII

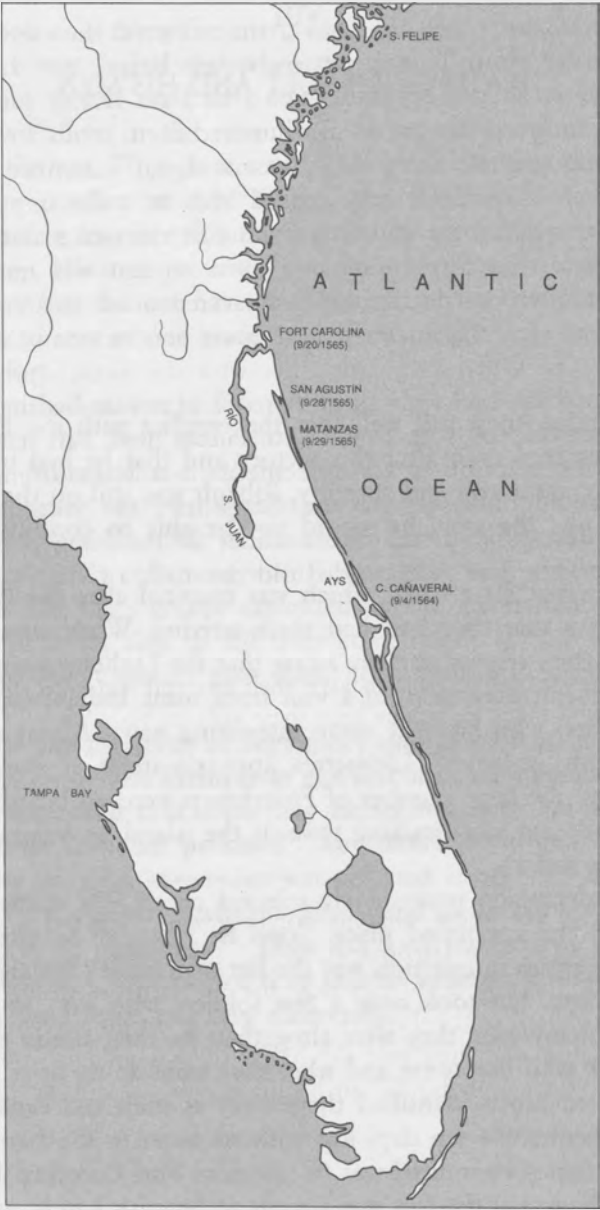
### DEATH OF RIBAUT AND HIS MEN

Menéndez knew full well that the conflict with the French was far from resolved even after this victory and that he had to continue acting both cautiously and speedily. Ribault was still on the loose and while this was the case, he would not be able to continue his own expansion.

They rested for a week, which was essential after the three tense, strenuous days that they had had since arriving. While organising the artillery in the harbour, vaguely aware that the Lutherans might appear at any moment, they received a visit from some Indians (on the 28th of September) who brought some interesting news. About six leagues to the south (some 33 kilometres approximately), a ship had run aground and the large number of Frenchmen were on board; they had swum ashore and were walking towards the island of Anastasia (which is Matanzas today).

The Adelantado immediately selected about fifty soldiers and set off towards the appointed place. Soon he was able to ascertain that indeed, the group in question was the last of Ribault's bedraggled crew. He drew close, but took only a few soldiers with him so as not to show how many men they were altogether; he then strode right up to them to ask who they were and what they were doing there.

The Frenchmen identified themselves as such and explained that they had spent some ten days lost without water or food and that the only thing that they wanted was to return to Fort Carolina. Menéndez then told them that the fort was already in Spanish hands, and that all their compatriots had either died or had been taken prisoner and that they ought therefore to surrender.



Conflicts between Pedro Menéndez de Avilés and the French: Fort Caroline, Matanzas, Ays.

Without any other alternative, they offered themselves up and handed over their few weapons in exchange for their lives. Nevertheless, the Adelantado, who had no living quarters nor provisions to offer this group of a hundred men, told them he would accept nothing short of a full, unconditional surrender. In a last attempt to save themselves, they asked Menéndez for ships and some supplies so as return to France, appealing to the peace and friendship between their respective monarchs. Their request was impossible to satisfy: the Spanish ships (the few that remained to them, for the strongest were at the islands), had been sent to San Mateo with reinforcements. Other cargo, together with the French prisoners (the women and children captured at Fort Carolina) under the charge of Francisco de Genovés had gone to Puerto Rico. As far as peace between the two countries was concerned, the Adelantado made it clear that this could only refer to the Catholics; the Protestant faction, wherever they came from, were enemies of the King of Spain and therefore of his. The Adelantado told the King of the events in the following manner:

I answered that we had taken their fort and had killed those we had found there, for having been there without Your Majesty's permission and that I, as Governor and Captain General, waged merciless war against all those who came to these parts to colonize and to implant the evil protestant fungus [...] and thus I would not give them passage. I would pursue them by land and sea until I saw them dead <sup>1</sup>.

They did not know what to do; they sensed that their death was near at hand and in a last, desperate bid, they offered money (for they were mostly rich), a gesture which the Adelantado would not even consider. Eventually, the French decided to give themselves up before dying of hunger or falling into the hands of the Indians <sup>2</sup>. One by one, their hands were tied behind their backs; since they were so many, it was

<sup>1</sup> E. Ruidíaz Caravia, *op. cit.*, vol. I, chap. XI, p. 114. L. Tormo Sanz, *Viajes por Norteamérica*, letter from Pedro Menéndez to Philip II, on the 15th of October 1565. A.C.R., leg. 2, n.º 1.

<sup>2</sup> N. Le Challeux, *Discurso de la historia de La Florida*, in E. Ruidíaz Caravia, *op. cit.*, p. 758.

thought they could otherwise easily escape. Then after separating the few who identified themselves as Catholics —some ten or twelve—, the rest were slaughtered there and then (on the 29th of September 1565).

The Adelantado was slowly achieving his principle objective that he had aspired to on coming to Florida. Even so, he had not yet confronted his most dangerous rival, Jean Ribault. The latter was an individual who preferred to root out his adversaries instead of waiting until they surprised him. Menéndez was thus still concerned. For that reason he was greatly satisfied when he received a further visit from some Indians who brought news that another group of white men were to be found very close to the fort of San Agustín. They had to be Ribault's men and so Menéndez took the opportunity that he was waiting for. At the risk of leaving only a few soldiers behind at the fort, he took a hundred and fifty to the place that they had been told about.

Menéndez could hardly have imagined that the same situation would arise as it had done a few days before. Invited by the Adelantado to his ship, Ribault explained that he had been lost, that he had no weapons or food and that the only thing he was trying to do was to return to his fort. When they told him what had happened to his former possession and to all his men, he demanded proof, for he could not believe his ears. But the evidence was such that he could not but accept the truth. No-one could help them, and it was clear that in spite of being numerous —some three hundred and fifty—, they were at the mercy of the Spanish soldiers. Menéndez had stationed his men in such a way that it was impossible to work out the strength of their numbers.

After again rejecting large sums of money which Ribault offered him in exchange for their lives, the Adelantado told them to surrender unequivocally. In the event, some one hundred and fifty gave themselves up and the rest of the group made off in the night. The ritual was similar to the lot that their compatriots had undergone earlier. They separated the Catholics (of whom there were sixteen) and the rest were all slaughtered, including Captain Ribault, who was executed by Solís de Meras (the brother in law of the Adelantado). Beside the bodies they erected a panel on which they wrote: «not for being French, but for being Lutherans». From then on, this place has been called «Matanzas» (Killings) owing to the brutal events which took place there.



On returning to San Agustín, some of the troops criticised Menéndez for the action he had taken. In fact this series of events has been one of the most controversial of Menéndez's operations. There have been neither impartial nor dispassionate interpretations. Doubtless it was an extremely brutal measure, but it would be misleading to ignore the fact that Menéndez had gone to Florida expressly for that, for expelling the French. He chose the method which seemed the most adequate and the least dangerous for the Spaniards. Also we should understand that Menéndez was a protagonist of the xvth century when religious intransigence was the norm. And he was an executor to a King who, in accordance with international law and the supreme authority of the Catholic Church, had repeatedly shown that he would go to any lengths to prevent others from interfering with his rights and with his territory. The bigotry of this behaviour which is today so clear, should be examined in its broader context instead of simply homing in on the isolated fact. Only then will we reach more balanced conclusions. Various writers, not all of whom are Spanish, have interpreted it in this way:

He is a very controversial figure, but he certainly had a fairly disagreeable role in the conquest, where he achieved precisely what was asked of him; but he left behind an image of cruelty and harshness which are barely understandable today. The religious struggle had become extremely violent and Menéndez was an actor in that violence: since they were Frenchmen, the land was not theirs, and as Huguenots they were condemned to death<sup>3</sup>.

Menéndez, who had neither guard nor provisions for over a hundred prisoners, put them to the sword<sup>4</sup>.

There was not enough food for both Frenchmen and Spaniards. Besides the prisoners outnumbered their captors. Furthermore, since the French were heretics, it was legally permissible to burn them; instead, Menéndez had granted them honorable death with blades of steel<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> González Ruiz, *De La Florida a San Francisco*.

<sup>4</sup> A. Bushell, «The Noble and Loyal City, 1565-1568», *The Oldest City*, San Augustine Historical Society, Florida, 1983, p. 30.

<sup>5</sup> A. Manucy, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

"Justice" hung in the shade until it left a bad taste in the Adelantado [...] Well could an experience so macabre as the case of the "Matanzas" carried out by Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, following the incisive instructions of that most Christian of Kings Philip II, lend force to the notion that Spain at that time, (never again quite as keenly), was the «hammer or heretics». The history of the «justices» of the Adelantado are one more enactment of the religious wars which were Europe's great tragedy in the xvth century <sup>6</sup>.

Philip II reacted to the challenge of the French Huguenots with his characteristic "ira santa" (holy anger). The pitiless reaction of the Spanish sovereign, at a time when there was no actual war between his country and France, was also typical of the political standards and customs of the century, and they ought not to scandalize us today <sup>7</sup>.

These killings which Pedro Menéndez carried out against the French protestants is fully justified if we place ourselves in the spirit of the times at which it happened, and if we take into account how civil, religious and political wars were fought in Europe in the xvth century <sup>8</sup>.

The support that the Crown gave was wholehearted. The way in which it communicated its opinions to the Adelantado admitted no doubt, as is clear from the letter which the monarch wrote to him:

We are immensely content at the excellent turn of events you have had in these days [...] and as far as the "justice" which you have delivered to the Lutheran pirates who wanted to occupy and fortify themselves on the mainland in order to sow their evil preaching and to continue doing damage to the name of our God, we believe you have acted with complete justification and prudence and we consider it very well dealt with <sup>9</sup>.

If any doubt remained about the royal attitude, on the 3rd of November 1567 the King dispatched a new Royal Warrant from the

<sup>6</sup> M. C. Vigil, *Pedro Menéndez de Avilés*, Gijón, 1987, p. XXX of the prologue.

<sup>7</sup> L. de Zalamea, *España omnipresente en La Florida*, Miami, 1978.

<sup>8</sup> M. Kenny, *The Romance of Florida. The finding and the founding*, New York.

<sup>9</sup> A.C.R., leg. 2. Letter from Philip II to Pedro Menéndez dated the 12th of May

Escorial<sup>10</sup>. In this he nominated the Captain General of the Armada, a man of the sea and the land to gather on the coast of Vizcaya to pursue and destroy the French and English pirates who sailed about the Indies - especially about La Española, San Juan and Cuba and the coast of Florida. He ordered that all should lend their support and help, so that they would be able to obtain what was necessary for Florida at a moderate price<sup>11</sup>.

If this cooperation was important for the Adelantado, the Church's response was even more significant, for it legitimised all action decisively. In this respect, Pope Saint Pius V wrote to him on the 18th of August 1569:

[...] but there is nothing more important for these idolotrous Indians than remorselessly to prevent their being scandalized by the vices and foul ways of the Protestant who travels from Europe to those parts<sup>12</sup>.

While these things were happening the fort of San Mateo, so recently taken from the French, was burnt down, along with all the provisions which it housed. It was never known if it had started by accident or by some disgruntled soldier.

#### MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

Once Ribault was dead the danger, at least for the moment had passed. They had achieved the principle objective of the expedition, at a high price, it is true, but the satisfaction of victory was none the less for that. Other Frenchmen remained in the area —those who fled from Ribault's party for example—, but even they did not preoccupy Menéndez, for Spanish dignity was safe: he would soon root them out and expel them. He would do so until he was certain that there was no Huguenot left in Florida.

<sup>10</sup> A.C.R., leg.2, n.º 3.

<sup>11</sup> The King to the Audiencia of Santo Domingo. A.G.I., SD 899, book II, pp. 52-52.

<sup>12</sup> E. Ruidíaz Caravia, *op. cit.*, tome II, p. 299; M. C. Vigil, *Noticias biográficas-genealógicas de Pedro Menéndez de Avilés*, Gijón, 1987, p. 169, appendix V.

Once again, it was the Indians who alerted the Adelantado to the presence of a group of people (brothers of those whom he had killed), next to the Bahama Straits (Cape Cañaveral). They were attempting to construct a fort and a boat. This news confirmed his fears which Pedro Menéndez then confided to the King in one of his letters:

[...] before Juan Ribao set off from France, he had been given orders to build a fortress on the island of Mártires, which has a frontier with Havana, and is about twenty five or thirty leagues walk, so that no ship can run through the straits, nor disembark without their seeing them <sup>13</sup>.

They did not like the idea of leaving San Agustín unprotected. They did not want to fall into the same trap which they themselves had profitted by in the taking of Fort Carolina. But they saw it necessary to put an end to this small group of Frenchmen once and for all, so as to be able to embark on the ultimate goal of their journey which was to colonize Florida.

Having agreed with his brother Bartolomé, who became Captain of San Agustín again, they asked for reinforcements at the fort of San Mateo and organized two expeditions: one by sea commanded by Diego Amaya with three vessels and provisions for forty days, and the other by land. Both started on a course towards the Straits on the 26th of October 1565.

The French must have been very fearful of Menéndez given the previous experiences. Scarcely had the news dropped that the Spaniards were approaching (on the 2nd of November 1565), than they abandoned the fort that they were building and fled for their lives. However, either because he thought that with Ribault out of the way, the real danger had passed and he could thus afford to be more generous, or simply because he was weary, Menéndez told them that if they were to give themselves up, he would pardon them all. Most, some one hundred and fifty, returned and surrendered. A small group of about twenty refused to do so after saying that «they would prefer to be eaten by the Indians than surrender to the Spanish» <sup>14</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> L. Tormo Sanz, *op. cit.*, tome II, pp. 915-925.

<sup>14</sup> E. Ruidíaz Caravia, *op. cit.*, vol. I, chap. XII, p. 131.

This time they were received in a fairly friendly fashion. But to avoid being cheated, the Spaniards confiscated all the provisions and food that might be of use; it was also ordered that the fort and ship, that were both half built, be destroyed. They were in a hurry to leave for there were a considerable number of them and they could not survive for very long. All together they began the trek to Cuba, where they had planned for the French to stay; under no circumstances would Menéndez allow them to stay in Florida. In passing through, they would also ask for help for their forts which had already begun to be ravaged by shortages.

Jean Ribault's own senior pilot navigated the ships along the coast until they reached the port of Ays on the 4th of November. They received a warm welcome from the cacique, who lodged them for a few days. They exchanged gifts and were very attentive to one another. It was the first occasion on which Menéndez and his men had come into such close contact with an Indian people, and he made his attitude clear from the beginning. He had no desire to wage war on them. They had fulfilled their objective in expelling the French from the mainland, and from now on they wanted to leave violence behind, to cultivate friendship and to maintain good relations with the Indians in general.

It was tempting, in such circumstances, to stay put and savour their long desired triumph with a deserved rest. The hospitality of the Indians was seductive. But Menéndez had not forgotten the penury that prevailed at the forts. Because of the bad weather, he saw that it was necessary to leave as soon as possible. But it seemed a sufficiently safe spot, so he decided to leave most of his troops there with Captain Juan Vélez de Medrano in charge, even though, when it came to the point, many pleaded against the decision. These men had left San Agustín for war, and there seemed little point in taking them to Cuba with the Frenchmen.

With the departure of the Frenchmen, Menéndez had finally achieved what must have seemed impossible at many moments. If the Spaniards had not established themselves in Florida before, the added problem of the French gave reason to believe that this journey would end in just as unfortunate circumstances as the others.

The determination to conquer Florida had involved much suffering; the deceptions and the frustrations had mounted up. Now

Menéndez had given cause for hope; in so doing he reached new heights in his political career. If the King had ever had any doubt about having such confidence in the Adelantado, in November 1565, he was able to prove that he had not been mistaken.

#### RESPONSIBILITIES

Among the survivors who returned to France, René de Laudonnière took the burden of all the criticism. He was accused of negligence and of allowing himself to be surprised in spite of knowing that the Spaniards could turn up. He was dismayed and there was little that could be said in his favour. Giving evidence to the Queen, he tried to justify his defeat in the following way:

I will say one thing clearly. Ribault's long delay after setting sail, and the fifteen days he spent wandering along the coast of Florida before arriving at Fort Carolina was the real cause of our defeat. He reached the coast on the 19th of August and then lost time in going from river to river. I know that he did all this with the best of intentions, but in my opinion, he should have given more attention to his duty than to his own ideas, of which at times there were rather too many. It was always difficult to distract him from them, and that was what was bad.

When he arrived a tempest blew up and he was shipwrecked on the coast. For this reason, he fell into the hands of the Spaniards who massacred him and his entire party<sup>15</sup>.

But France would not forgive the humiliation it had received. If Coligny had wanted to bind the people together under a common ideal, the defeat in Florida had an explosive impact, on a scale that was much greater than could have been foreseen. The national indignation reached most sectors of the population: those who had been murdered by Menéndez had not only been Huguenots; they were also Frenchmen, and they represented the citizens of the country. Families and friends of the dead, and above all the widows, set up a

<sup>15</sup> R. de Laudonnière, *Historical Collections...*, chap. XVIII.

commission so as to lodge a formal complaint to the King of Spain, whom they thought of as ultimately responsible for the deaths of their loved ones. They also demanded some form of compensation from their Queen (in August 1566) who had sent the fleet to Florida in the first place, though not officially.

The petitions were mainly written and they put their proposal in this way: «Application to the King (Charles IX) made in the form of an entreaty by the widows, orphan children and close relations of those who were cruelly slain by the Spanish in Florida.» In it, apart from drawing up a list of the brutalities which, to their minds the Spaniards had committed, they showed how the voyage had been organized by the Crown:

[...] these subjects were sent by Your Majesty after you had studied the credentials of Jean Ribault [...] there these subjects were sent not as spies or as evildoers, but as official ambassadors and ministers of Your Majesty, and thus it is recognized in your letters and patents [...] <sup>16</sup>.

However, if it had not been opportune to give official backing to the journey before the departure, for diplomatic reasons, it was now even less propitious for the Crown to accept the responsibility for these events. They had to bear the dignity of the nation in mind. So the French sovereign made a lame effort to ask Philip II to punish Pedro Menéndez in some way for having overstepped his duty.

The ambassador Fourquevaux approached Isabel de Valois, Philip II's wife, to see whether, through her mediation, the French people would be given some compensation. When the Spanish monarch was presented with these claims, he did not hesitate for a second. He repeated what he had said so often before those highly strategic territories belonged to Spain, and the presence of representatives from another country there would not be tolerated and would continue to be so prevented, however often in the future, especially if such invaders espoused another religion.

<sup>16</sup> N. Le Challeux, «Discurso de La Florida», in E. Ruidíaz, *op. cit.*, pp. 771-778.



So Philip was unbending. He was so proud to have obtained a great victory over his long-standing enemy that he even refused to receive the French ambassador and sent him to the Duke of Alba instead<sup>17</sup>. The latter was known for his severity however, and he only repeated the King's arguments - there would be no kind of reparation, much less any punishment for Pedro Menéndez. After this, between 1559 and 1598, France became embroiled once again in religious upheavals. The ensuing weakness of its state allowed Philip II and his collaborators to dominate the political sphere from Cateau-Cambrésis to Florida.

The French desire for revenge was contained for the time being, but only by the fear which the Adelantado inspired and by the toughness that the King of Spain demonstrated in the out-and-out defense of his interests in the Indies. Nevertheless they would be a permanent danger.

<sup>17</sup> Ch. Lowery Woodbury, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 320.

## IX

### COLONIZATION OF FLORIDA

On arriving in Havana, the Adelantado was overjoyed to find that his nephew, Pedro Menéndez Márquez, had finally arrived. On the journey from Spain, a storm had taken him unawares, and he had been separated from Esteban de las Alas' fleet. It was only after many difficulties that he had managed to get to Havana <sup>1</sup>.

All this was highly satisfactory for Menéndez, even though he could see that his commitment to the Crown had scarcely begun. Above all, he could not forget the plight of the others back in Florida: the fort of San Mateo had burnt down and very few provisions were now left in San Agustín. He feared that cold and hunger would be weakening them and they would need all their strength to fend off a possible Indian attack.

The first thing that the Adelantado did was to visit the Governor of the island, García Osorio, to tell him of the extreme conditions his men were having to suffer. The response, however, was both abrupt and negative. He was told that it was impossible to help him, even on a personal level. It is certainly surprising that a man who ought to have been able to rely on strong support was always stumbling against official bolshiness of this sort. Doubtless this had something to do with Menéndez's character, which was little acquainted with administrative strictures. Also, enjoying such unlimited favour with the Crown, he was bound to raise resentment among his contemporaries.

<sup>1</sup> It should be remembered that Pedro Menéndez Marquez's fleet was coming from Vizcaya, while that of Esteban de las Alas was coming from Asturias. Both fleet should have arrived in Florida with Pedro Menéndez de Avilés' fleet.

In spite of these set-backs, Menéndez was not going to give up of course. He went to look for help amongst friends on the island; he even went as far as to sell a small Portuguese boat that he had captured on the way to Florida. But there was only one reliable source of support, and he was to turn to it once again. He wrote to the King asking for reinforcements as soon as could be arranged. He even suggested that any shipments should go directly to Florida without passing through Havana. He would, after all, be returning to Florida in case of a French counterattack. Both his concern and his frustration were reflected in the letter that he then wrote to the King:

... the Governor of this island has not helped me with a penny, even though he can see the awkward position I am in, and can appreciate how much I need provisions to take with me to the forts. In spite of it all, he still refuses to help me <sup>2</sup>.

On the 3rd of December, he left Havana for Matanzas, with the few supplies that he was able to lay his hands on. On the way he met a Portuguese party, who had brought a message from the King. The letter informed them that since France was thought to be organizing another expedition for Florida, he (the King) was now sending eight hundred men and reinforcements to Havana. This news immediately altered the scenario, and Menéndez's plans changed likewise. Since he had such bad relations with the Governor and the authorities on the island he thought it wise to wait in person for the arrival of these supplies.

The change of plan would not seriously worsen the situation which his companions were already in. Without delay he sent a number of ships to Campeche (in Mexico) and another to Plata (in Dominica), with orders to collect all the food that they could, even if they had to sell personal objects, and to take it immediately to San Agustín and San Mateo.

Though he would have prepared to have left for Florida (the objective of his journey after all) Menéndez Márquez returned to Spain to present the news to the King in person. The Adelantado could not

<sup>2</sup> L. Tormo Sanz, «Relación de viajes a La Florida», in *Viajes por Norteamérica*, letter from Pedro Menéndez de Avilés to the King on the 30th of January 1566.

be sure whether the tendentious and malicious rumours which were circulating about him had reached the royal court. He preferred a member of his family to fulfil this mission. Apart from conveying the details of his first triumphs in Florida, Menéndez wanted to ask the King to confer noble titles to those of his relatives who had taken part in these feats: Esteban de las Alas, Pedro Menéndez Márquez, Hernando de Miranda and Diego de Miranda, so as to «enoble the blood of Florida»<sup>3</sup>.

While they anxiously waited for news from Spain, they were told that somewhere on the coast of Florida, in an area belonging to the Cacique Carlos, some Christians had been living as Indian slaves for about twenty years. When these unfortunate people heard of Menéndez's presence, they begged him to rescue them. This in itself would have persuaded the Adelantado to leave; at the same time it was rumoured that there were Frenchmen in the area of Santa Elena (to the north of San Mateo). Loyal as ever to his watchword «new decisions for new situations», he got ready to set off with seven ships and five hundred men (and did so on the 10th of February 1566).

As soon as they arrived in Florida, a man of Indian appearance came out to meet them. To their surprise, he seemed to address them in perfect Spanish and he proceeded to tell of the miserable life he was leading at the hands of the tribe of the Cacique Carlos<sup>4</sup>. When they eventually met the Indian chief, the Adelantado showered him with gifts, but avoided showing any weakness. From the very beginning, he told the Cacique that he should give up the Christians that he had in his keep; otherwise he would surely die. The Cacique agreed, but he only set free a few, promising that he would do the same with the rest in three months time, when the Spaniards should come again to pick them up.

The Adelantado could well have forced him to hand them all over, but he had decided not to use this kind of strategy with the Indians. His attitude towards the Indians was friendly throughout; only on exceptional occasions did he declare war on them. Menéndez's

<sup>3</sup> E. Lyon, *The Enterprise of Florida, Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, and the Spanish Conquest of 1565-1568*, Gainesville, 1983, p. 137.

<sup>4</sup> He gave this name to himself, for some foreigner had told him that the most powerful man in the world was Charles V.

enemy was the French; to the Indians he was always an ally. He even acted as an intermediary between embattled tribes.

They stayed for a number of days with the Cacique. Spaniards and Indians alike keenly observed each other's ways; finally the Indian offered his sister to the Adelantado as a token of his friendship. Though at first Menéndez resisted the offer, he ultimately accepted so as not to unsettle the good relations. She was then baptized as Antonia<sup>5</sup>, and was taken away along with a whole retinue of assistants. The whole group repaired to Havana with Esteban de las Alas, while Menéndez continued his journey.

It was at about this time that the Adelantado's news finally reached Spain. At the same time however, preparations for the voyage to carry the necessary reinforcements to Florida ordered by Philip II were already under way. Don Sancho de Archineaga had been appointed Captain.

But once he was informed of Menéndez's success, Philip reckoned that the one thousand, five hundred men whom he had recruited to go to Florida, would not all now be necessary. He thus ordered that at least a third should stay on the Spanish islands<sup>6</sup>. In his earnest desire to inspire the monarch in the Florida matter, and to draw attention to his triumphs, Menéndez had forgotten to emphasise the exhaustion of his men in Florida in his first letter. They could have done with some new energy from time to time, and indeed, it might have avoided the constant desertions.

In fact, when Menéndez arrived in San Agustín<sup>7</sup>, he encountered a truly disheartening state of affairs. Punished by the harshness of the winter, the soldiers had taken advantage of Pedro de Valdés' illness and mutinied. Many of them had abandoned their posts, and some had even fled from Florida. Though the Adelantado was highly indignant, he could see that excessively severe or disciplinarian measures would be counter-productive in this instance. He thus chose to try to

<sup>5</sup> They had prayed to St. Anthony during their voyage, and it was for that reason that they called the port that they arrived at this name, and Carlos' sister, Antonia.

<sup>6</sup> E. Lyon, *op. cit.*, p. 146.

<sup>7</sup> At this time, the Spaniards had three enclaves in Florida: San Agustín, San Mateo and the group which stayed in the land of Ays under the command of Juan Vélez de Medrano.

understand the soldiers' predicament and then to appeal once again for royal help: «[...] that the people at the forts are basically good, but the cold of the winter has killed more than a hundred people, particularly as they have had so little to wear. There is a desperate need for food»<sup>8</sup>.

He began by trying to give encouragement to everyone and tried to reinforce the fort. When the soldiers were calmer, he left for San Mateo, for there were some worrying reports about the situation there too. Regrettably, they were not exaggerated: riots, desertions and quarrels seemed to be part of the daily routine at the fort. It was in fact even more serious than in the others, for a fire had burnt up the few reserves they had had. Once the situation was under control, they got ready to set off for Guale in search of the French (March 1566).

While all this was happening, the auxiliary expedition from Spain had set off. It cost the Crown (via the "Casa de Contratación") 34,620,853 maravedis, and a further 2,219,849 maravedis for food that awaited them in Santo Domingo. Like Menéndez on his first journey to Florida, Archineaga omitted to stop at Santo Domingo in view of the extreme urgency of the voyage<sup>9</sup>.

When Menéndez's men arrived at Guale, they met a Spaniard called Guillermo, who was married to a Frenchwoman, and who had come with Ribault's troops. This man informed them of the great power of the Cacique of the area (Guale), who was protecting a small group of Frenchmen who were taking refuge from the Spanish presence in Florida. He also told them that this Cacique was on enemy terms with the Cacique of Santa Elena (in Orista).

From the beginning, Menéndez wanted peace to be made between all Caciques in Florida. If all were on friendly terms, it would be less difficult for them to establish similar relations with the Spanish; if they were divided, to be friendly with one group would imply automatic enmity with another. Mindful of this objective, he managed to convince the Indians that the persistent drought that they had had to suffer for over eight months, was a sign of God's anger at their

<sup>8</sup> Letter from Pedro Menéndez de Avilés to the King on the 30th of January 1566, the Naval Museum, Ms. Colec. Nav., vol. XIX, p. 281.

<sup>9</sup> P.E. Hoffman, *op. cit.*, p. 258.

constant disputes. He left two of his Captains there as a guarantee that he would be returning; one of them was his own nephew Alonso Menéndez. He then moved on to Santa Elena in search of Orista to make more peace.

By now a confusion had emerged in many parts, as to the term «Christians» which French Lutherans and Spaniards seemed to use indiscriminately. The Adelantado, whose faith was one of the main features of his outlook on life, explained that, in his opinion, there were «true» Christians and «false» Christians. He was of course one of the former. The Spanish missionaries had not yet arrived, and Menéndez decided to take on the responsibility of explaining religious truths to the Indians. He also appointed various Spaniards (including his nephew Alonso) to stay behind in some areas to do the missionary work by living on a daily basis with the Indian people.

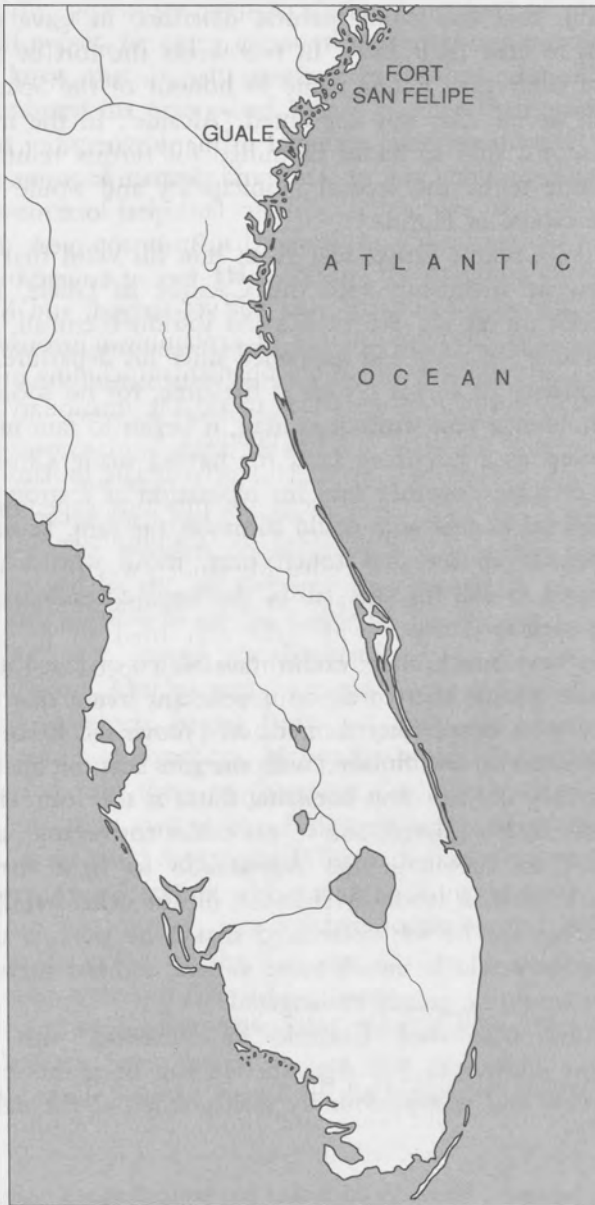
In Santa Elena, they were very well received. The Indians were not hostile in the least, as they had been on previous expeditions. The reason for this change of attitude may be complicated, but there are certainly two principle reasons. Pedro Menéndez was never aggressive towards them, nor did he engage in any double-dealing. On the contrary, he showered them with gifts and tried to be amicable. Secondly they were afraid. News would travel at a speed that is scarcely comprehensible for so dispersed a population; any event that occurred in one place would soon be heard in adjacent provinces. What shocked the Indians most was the bloody confrontation between the Spanish and the French; they could not understand it, for they were all «white and came from afar». This struggle made Menéndez into the most feared and most respected man in Florida. The Caciques now feared the idea of coming into conflict with him; they thus preferred friendship, which they duly offered.

#### FOUNDATION OF THE FORT OF SAN FELIPE. SERIOUS PROBLEMS AT THE FORTS

The Adelantado thought that this would be a good place in which to establish the third fortifications after those at San Agustín and San Mateo<sup>10</sup>. So when they reached an island (which is known as Parris

<sup>10</sup> In the fifth section of the Asiento between the Crown and Pedro Menéndez, the latter was obliged to create at least three fortresses in Florida.





Location of Fort San Felipe

Island today), that had solid, natural defences, he gave orders for construction to start right away. In two weeks the fort of San Felipe was finished (they gave it this name in honour of the Spanish King) and Esteban de las Alas was appointed 'Alcaide'. In the mean time, Menéndez sent a ship to Santo Domingo for further reinforcements. This fort came to be the second municipality and would eventually become the capital of Florida <sup>11</sup>.

Once the Cacique Orista had given him his word that he would be on terms of friendship with the Cacique in Guale, Menéndez returned to Guale on the 8th of May to inform them all, Christians and Indians alike, of what had happened since his departure. Even the climate seemed to be in his favour at the time, for no sooner had he arrived than, after a year without rainfall, it began to rain madly. This was interpreted as a gift from God for having made Christians and friends out of foes. Together with his reputation as a strong man, his fame now spread as one who could summon the rain. People flocked to him, anxious to see and touch him; those who had become Christians tried to kiss his cross all in the hope of inducing the rain, as had happened in Guale.

On their way South, they reached San Mateo on the 15th of May. This time the people there were in a peaceful frame of mind, even though they were desperately in need of provisions. Once the local Indians (the Saturiba) had finished with the gifts that the Spaniards had given them, they did not stop harassing those at the fort. The Alcaide Villarroel was ill, humiliated, and in his desire for revenge against the Indians, tried to encourage the Adelantado to fight them, or to demolish or burn their towns. Menéndez, on the other hand, preferred not to interfere, for he was convinced that if he were to do so, the Indian response would be much more violent and the survival of the Spanish fort would be greatly endangered.

The Adelantado took Gonzalo de Villarroel with him and continued his journey to San Agustín. He had been much dismayed by these events and was profoundly disheartened at the delay in the

<sup>11</sup> In the beginning, Menéndez established that Santa Elena was more fit to be the capital, but this was not always to be the case. The continuous attacks from the Indians meant that it had to be abandoned for two years (1576-1578) and again in 1587. At this time, San Agustín came to be the capital of Spanish Florida.

arrival of the provisions, which could jeopardize all that he had achieved. However, he never imparted these feelings to anyone at any time. He knew that if, on previous expeditions, the Adelantado's presence amongst his troops had helped to keep their spirits high, he himself was indispensable to his men; his charisma inspired loyalty. He therefore continued steering from fort to fort and from there to other islands in search of help.

When they got to San Agustín (on the 18th of May 1566), Bartolomé Menéndez and Diego Flores de Valdés told him of the insecurity of the fort, which had become a permanent target of Indian attacks. It was too important strategically to be on permanent alert. They thus set to work immediately and set up the fort on a slightly different site, just at the entry of the harbour, from where it would be easier to control the approaching ships. In addition there was only one means of access by land. But after a short time after beginning the works, they saw that the place they had chosen was not ideal, for it was too close to the water. The wooden construction was therefore bound to be quickly destroyed by the salt deposits; they moved in again, to where today it is still possible to see the Castle of San Marcos<sup>12</sup>.

Help had not arrived and Menéndez had, for that reason, to return to Havana. On his way he came across a Spanish ship laden with provisions which, having been lost along the shore, had spent many days searching for them. Menéndez explained exactly where the forts were, and told them to share out the rations equally. He then told the Captain to wait at San Mateo and gave instructions to sink the ship so as to avoid desertions<sup>13</sup>. The arrival of these reinforcements brought some relief but it did not actually change his plans. He continued on his journey, not forgetting that he was committed to returning to the land of the Cacique Carlos so as to collect the Christians who were still languishing there.

Even on this occasion, Menéndez could not find the support that he had asked for from the authorities, not even from Gerónimo de Valderrama, of the Royal Council of the Indies, who happened to be

<sup>12</sup> A. Bushell, «The noble and Loyal City 1565-1668», in *The Oldest City*, Saint Augustine Historical Society, Florida, 1983, chap. II, p. 32.

<sup>13</sup> B. Barrientos, *op. cit.*

on the island in his capacity as one of the King's inspectors. He did not actually refuse to help but nor did he provide any, alleging that he could not act without the expressed authority of the "Audiencia de Santo Domingo". The dream of Florida, a dream shared by the Crown and Menéndez, seemed to interest no-one else; a dream it would remain perhaps.

With so many difficulties, his stay in Cuba was bound to be prolonged. But he had given his word to return to the land of the Cacique Carlos. He picked up Doña Antonia, who had been in Havana all that time in the charge of Alonso de Rojas, and set off on his mission to free the Christians.

«Carlos the Great» of Florida was by no means an easy man. On this second occasion he refused to hand over his slaves. The Adelantado had no wish to provoke discord at the camp, for it was clear he could not make war on the Cacique, even though his approach had not worked as he would have wished. As soon as he had resolved his most pressing problem, that of procuring help, he planned to change his policy towards this powerful Indian. He left Doña Antonia there and returned to Havana, promising and intending to return.

His stay in Cuba seemed to involve striding from one authority to the next in search of help and resources, without anyone paying attention to his pleas. He knew he could not turn to his friends again, for he already owed them large debts. The bitter atmosphere compelled him to return to Florida again (on the 1st of July); at least he would have occasion to instil some heart into his troops, and if need be, to appeal to them not to abandon the enterprise.

Menéndez was always to have grave financial difficulties in Florida, not to mention discontented troops who did not seem to be terribly enthusiastic about the idea of colonizing the area. Menéndez's most serious difficulties included the scarcity of resources, the indiscipline of the troops, the desertions and the storms. Even Philip II, who never actually forgot him, organized support that either never arrived, or did so but too late. In spite of this, Professor Hoffman's exhaustive study has shown<sup>14</sup>, that the Crown spent more on Florida than any other place in the Indies during these years.

<sup>14</sup> P. Hoffman, *op. cit.*, pp. 255-261.

Hounded by the feeling that no-one was prepared to help him, Menéndez arrived at the fort of San Mateo (on the 10th of July). At last the news was more encouraging: not only did he find the ship he had sent there but also some of the reinforcements that Captain Archineaga had taken to San Agustín (on the 29th of June) and which, at the decision of his relative, were shared out between the forts <sup>15</sup>.

In San Agustín, the Adelantado met Captain Archineaga, who officially handed over all he had brought with him. There was food, clothes, weapons and men (some 1,500). Philip II had given orders for many of the men to be sent to fight the privateers so as to avoid more ships being stopped in their tracks and assaulted.

The situation was, for the first time, becoming rather normal and Menéndez was able to settle down calmly to inspecting the region round about, to making friends with any Caciques and to talking relaxedly with his troops and with his relatives, something that he had been unable to do for so long because of always being so busy. It was the best moment of the entire expedition. For a number of months during the summer of 1566, he went from fort to fort resolving minor conflicts and making contact with the great Caciques of the area; meanwhile he spread the Christian message. On his return, he sent Archineaga home to Spain with the Captian Ubila, and put Gonzalo de Villarroel in his place as "Alcaide" of San Mateo. Peace seemed to be reigning for the time being.

Meanwhile the formal protest from the French about the events that had taken place in Florida had arrived at the Spanish Court. On the 18th of August 1566, the French ambassador in Spain, Fourquevaux, told his superiors that he had asked for an official explanation from the Court, as to why the Catholic attitude towards the Huguenots had been so appalling in times of peace and alliance between the two countries.

The Crown's position was complicated. It did not wish to discredit Menéndez in any way, for he had only followed orders. At the same time, it feared a strong response from the French, which could well be backed by the rest of the Protestant world in Europe, where Philip II's

<sup>15</sup> At the forts at the time, there were Bartolomé Menéndez in San Agustín, Esteban de las Alas in San Felipe and Gonzalo de Villarroel was on his way to San Mateo again, who was returning with the Adelantado. E. Lyon, *op. cit.*, p. 183.

severity was already widely known and argued about. It was thought best to avoid these diplomatic encounters in the hope that the Spanish dominion of Florida would progress in the meanwhile, and that the French would be gradually appeased with the passage of time.

Back in Florida, Menéndez wanted to tour his forts again before leaving. He went north in search of a Cacique called Utina who had been identified as one of the most powerful in the land. It was convenient to find out, before moving on, exactly what the attitude of the more powerful Indian leaders was towards the Spaniards, so that once the Adelantado was again absent, the forts would not be attacked as they had been on previous occasions. If there had been some doubt about Utina's position, they were to profit from a further stroke of luck as regards the weather for it would again establish the Adelantado as a great God. Just as the latter was drawing into the Cacique's territories, for the first time in many months, a storm broke out and it began to rain furiously, for which Menéndez was perceived as the cause.

All Utina's dependent peoples were ordered to receive the Adelantado hospitably. They even asked him to teach them that new religion, of which he was doubtless the great leader, given the powers and qualities he had demonstrated. Menéndez did not have the time on his hands to clarify religious principles, but he distributed crosses wherever he went, so that when the monks finally arrived, they would carry out the real task of Christianizing.

In Santa Elena, where he was for a week, he made Esteban de las Alas lieutenant of those provinces. He would have liked to have had more time to advance northwards to look for new lands and to get to know the Caciques, but on the King's orders, he had to set off to fortify the island and to put a stop to the privateers. He appointed Juan Pardo as Captain, in whom he had full confidence, for this voyage of reconnaissance. Alberto Escudero, Hernando Boyano and another hundred and twenty soldiers accompanied him.

#### RELIGIOUS NEEDS. THE JESUIT EXPEDITION

At the beginning of September, Menéndez reached Guale where he learnt of the death of his nephew Alonso Menéndez, whom he had left there to teach the Indians Christian ways. The number of Indian



converts that he found there gave him an indication of the work which Alonso must have undertaken in this evangelizing mission, which he did purely out of good will.

The death of his nephew and the ready disposition of the Indians to his teaching moved Menéndez to write again to Spain to urge them to send missionaries as soon as possible:

I feel afflicted and lost to see that no-one from the Company of Jesus nor any other learned monk has come here; as we now have many Caciques here as friends, and there is also a good understanding and judgement on the part of all the indigenous people here, as well as a genuine desire to become Christians, six such monks would do more in a month than we or even many thousands of men, can do in years [...] <sup>16</sup>.

The delay in the monks' departure was not because the King, who shared Menéndez's concern was not interested; it was the Company of Jesus itself, which was beset by internal disputes that delayed the mission. However, the monks whom Menéndez had called for finally left Spain on the 28th of June 1566, a year after they had been meant to. By then the Jesuits could see that the expedition had not been defeated. The monks who went aboard were Father Martínez, Father Juan Rogel and Brother Francisco de Villarroel.

When the Jesuit party arrived in Florida, it lost the way for more than a month along the coast. They could not seem to find either of the forts which they had been referred to: San Agustín and San Mateo. Exhausted and lacking food they drew into the coast looking for fresh water and some information that would lead them to their destination. They did so several times, but once Father Martínez was making his way to the coast, a great storm blew up and separated him from the rest of the ships.

Father Martínez and his companions wandered around for about two weeks, scarcely knowing where they were going. Finally they made out a group of Indians. It seemed best to go up and ask if they had

<sup>16</sup> Letter from Pedro Menéndez to a Jesuit friend of his, in E. Ruidíaz Caravia, *op. cit.*, vol. II, chap. CV, p. 154, first appendix.



any information about the whereabouts of the forts as well as the rest of their own expedition which they had not seen again. However, the aggressive attitude of these Indians soon told them that they were not safe there and that they should move off. The sailors insisted on this, but Father Martínez did not allow them to launch their boat until all the men were on board, (for some had disembarked and not returned). The delay proved fatal: the Indians came towards the ship, took hold of it and, after forcing Father Martínez and two of the soldiers out of it, they slayed them on the spot. The others fled for their lives<sup>17</sup>.

Unfortunately, this death confirmed the fears of the "provincial" of Andalucía, Don Diego de Avellaneda, and of the "Vicario" General Francisco Borja about the idea of sending their men to Florida. Their missionary experience could not have started on a worse footing, even though the sad fate of Father Martínez did not scare off his immediate companions, who continued. Meanwhile in Spain, this event actually encouraged large numbers of volunteers to sign up and follow the example.

Menéndez wrote to the King about the arrival of this missionary expedition and the events that had come to pass:

On the 14th of September 1566, a vessel drew into the port of San Agustín [...] they said that some of our Indian enemies had murdered Father Martínez and three other men [...] and that he had brought all the messages from the Holy Father, and that they had all been lost [...] we who are here deserve so little that Our Lord has brought us this misfortune, for Father Martínez of whom we have so much need, the Spaniards and the indigenous people here alike, was too good to take him from our company»<sup>18</sup>.

This death was a serious setback for there were already very few missionaries and the Company of Jesus was then reluctant to send more, all the more so because the Adelantado was ultimately blamed for this unfortunate occurrence. «We would prefer that those who go

<sup>17</sup> F. J. Alegre, *Historia de la Compañía de Jesús de Nueva España*, Roma, 1956, p. 49.

<sup>18</sup> E. Ruidíaz Caravia, *op. cit.*, vol.II.

to the Indies do not only want to die, but are warned about saving their lives»<sup>19</sup>.

Once in San Agustín, Menéndez named the Captains which would lead the fleet with him to the islands. These would be: the Adelantado the Maestre de Campo, Juan Vélez de Medrano, Cristóbal de Herrera, Pedro de Rodabán, Baltasar de Barreda, García Martínez de Cos and Rodrigo Montes<sup>20</sup>. Juan de Zurita would be coordinating help in Puerto Rico, Rodrigo Troche in Santo Domingo and Baltasar de Barreda in Havana<sup>21</sup>.

Menéndez began the fortress on the island (on the 20th of October 1566) as had been ordered. First he went to the island of Mona (on the 5th of November), a place habitually plagued by pirates, and from then on his activity became frenetic. He went to Santo Domingo, Puerto Rico, Havana, Monte Cristo (next to Santo Domingo), Puerto Real (Jamaica) and Santiago de Cuba, and was surprised to find that on occasion, those there did not want him to leave his men there to defend them. They preferred to risk being unprotected than to let the Adelantado put soldiers under his command on the islands, because this, of course, increased his influence and competition in those places. However, the Adelantado was accustomed to this kind of resentment and continued his unrelenting activity. In only two months his expedition had sailed more than two thousand miles, stopping at some ten towns on the islands. He left a certain number of men in each place without forgetting the forts of Florida, where they were also necessary in view of the danger of either a French or an Indian attack.

#### ECONOMIC PROBLEMS.

The most vocal opposition to Menéndez was in Havana, partly because of the personal antipathy which the Governor felt for him. Menéndez's idea had been for his son-in-law, Pedro de Valdés, to build a fort in

<sup>19</sup> R. Vargas Ugarte, *Los mártires de La Florida*, Lima, 1940. Letter from Francisco de Borja, Vicario General of the Company of Jesus.

<sup>20</sup> E. Ruidíaz Caravia, *op. cit.*, vol. I, chap. XXIV, p. 267.

<sup>21</sup> E. Ruidíaz Caravia, *op. cit.*, vol. I, chap. XII, p. 248.

the harbour of the town, but when his projects were shown to the Governor, the latter denied them the license to do so. He alleged that responsibility for the security of the island was his alone, and that he would take any royal order to the contrary as a serious affront. All the soldiers on his territory had to be under his jurisdiction; Menéndez himself had to leave for his own territory, which was Florida and Florida alone<sup>22</sup>. This attitude, which was shared by the rest of the authorities on the island, made Menéndez relinquish the project.

It was not to be the only setback he would experience on this island, which served as the main port at which all provisions for Florida had to stop. Once the supplies arrived and were in his hands, Menéndez had to share them out between the different forts, which he did, though perhaps not always entirely equally. Criticism of him and above all of some members of his family multiplied not only in the Indies; it even reached the Court.

The main problem that Menéndez had to address as far as his family was concerned was the fact that few people seemed to know how to respond to the confidence that had been placed in them; indeed they often abused the position of privilege. If the Adelantado had any difficulty with Philip II, it involved financial or treasury matters, where his family were invariably implicated. Even though he was aware of this, he did not refrain from relying on them and offering them all possible authority and power. His family would install itself in Florida so resolutely that its power would eventually extend over the rest of the Caribbean and Mexico, not only during the xvth century but up until the xviii<sup>th</sup>. In the latter century two members of the Revillagigedo family, descendants of Menéndez, would hold the post of Viceroy of Mexico<sup>23</sup>. His obsessive desire that his family should stay in Florida after his death, even against the will of some of them, is reflected in his will.

<sup>22</sup> E. Lyon, *op. cit.*, p. 173.

<sup>23</sup> Don Francisco de Güemes y Horcasitas, first Count of Rivillagigedo was Viceroy of Mexico from 9th of July 1746, until the 9th of November 1755, when the Marquis of las Amarillas replaced him. Don Juan Vicente de Güemes y Pacheco de Padilla, the second Count of Revillagigedo, was Viceroy of Mexico from the 16th of October 1789 until the 26th of March 1794, when he was replaced by the Marquis of Franciforte. In Appendix VI of this book Pedro Menéndez's family tree, from the xvth to the xxth century is laid out.

In the conquest of Florida, as in other conquests, the protagonists' private interests clearly played a key role. Menéndez had won a prize contract for himself and for his family. Even so, what they could not obtain this way, they sometimes tried to achieve illegally arguing that the enormous personal and economic effort afforded them this privilege<sup>24</sup>. The diversion of royal resources to areas not actually specified by the monarch, and the blind eye he showed to those of his Captains who undertook illicit practices, was the only shadow cast over the Adelantado's relations with the Crown. There were also an endless series of legal cases with the "Casa de Contratación" which were to dent his political image. Whether such diversions of royal funds were intended or whether they were merely inefficiently administered, the reality was that misery was the most accentuated feature of life at the forts in Florida.

The unfavourable reports about his person which might have been reaching the ears of the Court, together with the lack of resources in the fort finally persuaded the Adelantado to prepare to return to Spain to look for solutions to both problems. He already had many things to resolve before leaving Florida because he wanted to leave matters in a relatively stable position. One of the issues which most concerned him was the problem with Cacique Carlos. Before setting off, he wanted to leave the area sufficiently indoctrinated with Christian teaching. For this he planned to marry Doña Antonia with a cousin of the Cacique's, baptised with the name of Don Pedro. If both were Christians, they would arguably guarantee the security of the religion in the most important area of Florida.

In order to gauge the situation properly, he sent Francisco de Reynoso to study the possibilities *in situ*. At first he was very well received by Carlos but something made him mistrust him and even Doña Antonia. After some days with them, he chose to leave for Havana to tell the Adelantado of his impression that the Cacique had no plans to set the Christians free, much less to convert them to Christianity. For the moment they gave up their initial idea; supposedly they did not realise that Carlos would be offended by the Spaniards' interference. A possible focus of conflict thus remained.

<sup>24</sup> E. Lyon, *op. cit.*, p. 174.

He then left for Carlos's territory, but with another objective in mind: to settle the peace between the Caciques, a matter which seemed almost impossible for there were so many disputes between them. At that time, Carlos was at war with the Cacique of Tequesta and Tocobaga and, in fact, since he had no desire for peace, he begged Menéndez to collaborate with him in order to finish them off. The last thing the Adelantado wanted to do was to embroil himself in a conflict to which he was completely indifferent. At the same time he needed the friendship of the powerful Cacique. He thus tried to convince him that his King (Philip II) would kill him if he waged war on the other Indian chiefs. This caused the Cacique great displeasure. He then had no other recourse but to accept peace. It was not easy to establish a friendship with this Cacique, a friendship he had looked for from the beginning, but it was impossible to spend any more time trying to obtain it. Peace reigned in the area, the two Jesuits, Father Rogel in Calusa and Brother Villarroel in Tequesta, had begun their missionary labour already, and anyway bad news beckoned him back to Havana.

On the island Governor Osorio had, as soon as Menéndez departed, ordered that the troops who remained behind should only obey the orders he gave. This action, apart from causing a division between the soldiers as to who they should owe allegiance to, encouraged some of them, like Captain Rodabán, to take advantage of the confusion, and to rise up against Menéndez's authority. He even tried to set out for New Spain without warning the Governor. The Adelantado spent a month tracing Rodabán who, as soon as he heard of his arrival and aware that the iron hand of punishment would be on him for what he had done, fled to the mountains.

Once Captain Rodabán had been taken prisoner, Menéndez returned to the fort of San Mateo. There he found that Gonzalo de Villarroel had seized some Indians (from Saturiba) who had been continually attacking the fort. Menéndez had not been able to get to know this Cacique, but he had heard that he was among the most independent of them. If he was to leave then without leaving this matter resolved in some way, the survival of the fort would be in obvious danger. When he was marching off to meet the Cacique, accompanied by Villarroel and the Indian prisoners, he was soon informed that the Cacique was preparing a huge ambush. He therefore

decided to withdraw and to keep the Indians as hostages in case he were to decide to attack again in the future.

In San Agustín, an unpleasant atmosphere prevailed. Captain Enríquez was apparently responsible for this when he disobeyed the orders of Bartolomé Menéndez; he appeared to be treating the men with hardened cynicism. This was somehow particularly serious because the men had enough to put up with, any way in terms of living conditions. The Adelantado believed in punishing this kind of behaviour severely so that a bad example should not be set, particularly as he was going to be absent for so long. But he changed his mind after his brother had begged him to. But so that he would not be left to stir up the troops any longer he decided to take Enríquez with him to Spain, together with Captain Rodabán, so that both could be judged by the Royal Council of the Indies.

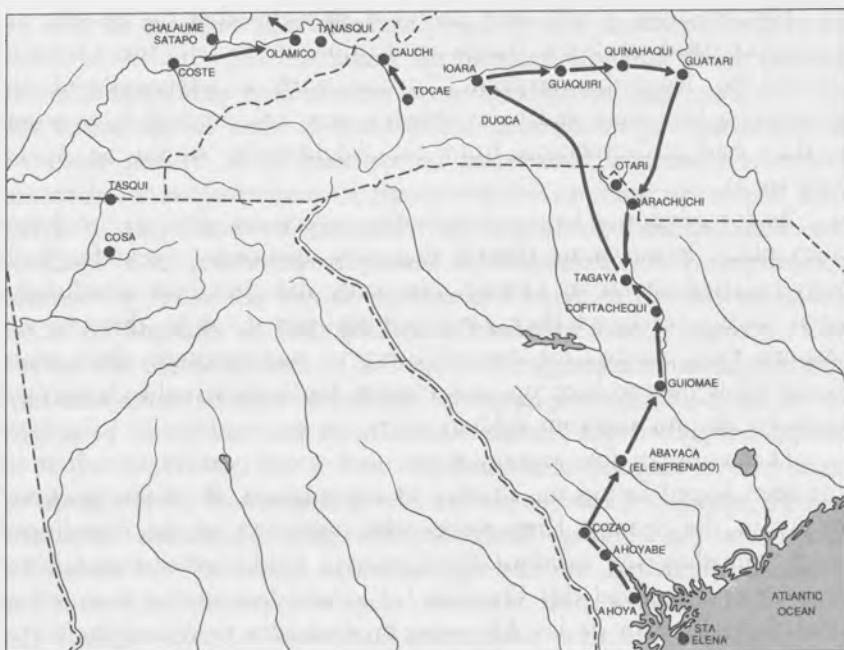
He appointed Esteban de las Alas lieutenant of all the lands of Florida in his absence. Only Saturiba gave Menéndez cause for doubting whether it was the right moment to set off. As always, he decided to go to the most dangerous place with seventy soldiers. It was the first time that the Adelantado had used weapons against the Indians. Seeing this, the Cacique did not even appear, and the Spaniards, who had no time to spare for a prolonged conflict withdrew to Santa Elena at the fort of San Felipe, which was the last fort they were to visit. There they found Captain Juan Pardo, who together with one hundred and twenty five soldiers had been exploring the interior of the country for more than four months, and teaching the ways of the Christian religion to the Indians.

#### JUAN PARDO'S JOURNEY

Juan Pardo told Menéndez what had happened on his journey in detail<sup>25</sup>. They had left the fort of Santa Elena on the 10th of November in a north-easterly direction. At the beginning the road had

<sup>25</sup> The information about Juan Pardo's journey can be found in A.C.R., leg. 2, n.º 3F in the memoirs of Juan de Labandera. The latter was an uncle of Pedro de Valdés (he was the brother of his mother, Teresa Menéndez de Labandera) and the Adelantado's son-in-law (through his marriage to his daughter Ana Menéndez); E. Ruidiaz





Map of Juan Pardo's journey

been very hard, and they had crossed swamp lands and others that were almost completely uninhabited. People had fled or, those close to the fort of Santa Elena had come close so as to observe the miracles which they had been told the Adelantado could perform. Further in, they began to pass by a large number of small villages<sup>26</sup>, all of whose people were extremely hospitable. The Caciques strode out to meet them in an earnest desire to collaborate and to accept the Christian teaching which the Captain and his men imparted in good faith.

Caravia, *op. cit.*, tome II, Appendix VII, «Relaciones»: account by Juan Pardo himself, pp. 465-473, account by the soldier Francisco Martínez, pp. 477-480.

<sup>26</sup> Juan de Labandera's description, collected in the A.C.R., mentions that they visited the following places on the expedition, which I will list here so as not to make the description of the voyage too exhaustive: Uscamacu, Ahoya, Ahoyabe, Cozao, El Enfrenado, Guimae, Canos, Tagaya, Gueza, Aracuch, Otariyatiqui, Guatari, Quinahaqui, Issa, Guaquiri, Ioara, Cauchi, Tanasqui, Olamico, Chalahume, Satapo, Cosa. This account is the most detailed available, and it shows some places which Juan Pardo's own memoir does not refer to.



The welcome which they gave was so warm that on arriving at the fertile land of Joara (Juada in Pardo's memoirs), the Captain decided to leave his sergeant Boyano with a reserve guard to construct a fort there and to establish a new holding which, as soon as they had authorization from the Adelantado, would be made permanent.

As for religion a large number of conversions were said to have taken place. It was more fruitful than any missionary work that had been initiated so far in Florida. Not only did the Indians willingly listen to the teachings they gave, but sometimes, as in the case of Guatari, they pleaded for one of them to stay amongst them who would know how to keep up this religion. So Pardo left the clergyman he had with him and four soldiers.

The results of this journey were much more positive than had at first been hoped for: in the absence of any mishaps, the Cacique swore loyalty to the Spanish King while other members of the expedition began spreading the word of the Christian God. Pardo would have liked to have enjoyed this situation for longer, but all too soon word came from Esteban de las Alas who ordered him to return for there was a possible threat of French forces arriving.

He had the disagreeable surprise of finding, on passing through Joara, that the small fort which they had constructed was inhabited by Indians, and there was no trace of his sergeant and his men. Fortunately he found them later in Chihaque, where they had been hiding in their attempt to return to Santa Elena, after being pursued relentlessly by some Indians. When the expedition returned on the 11th of July 1567 the Adelantado was able to hear Pardo give his impressions about those lands, the people and the way of life.

He had to set off to Spain for food and he had to do so as soon as was possible if he wanted to see the King, who was preparing to go to Flanders<sup>27</sup>. On the 18th of May 1567, Menéndez set sail from Santa Elena accompanied by Pedro de Valdés, a number of soldiers and the two prisoners, Pedro de Rodabán and Miguel Enríquez; in total they were thirty-eight men.

<sup>27</sup> In the end, the voyage which the Spanish monarch prepared to make to Flanders, never actually materialized.

Two years after his leaving Spain, Menéndez had fulfilled his objective. Florida, which since 1513 had been Spanish by rights, came to be Spanish in fact after numerous inglorious defeats. They had by then constructed three forts, at San Agustín, San Mateo, and San Felipe and they had managed to make peace between Caciques. They had initiated some missionary work and above all they had, for the first time, installed families in Florida who were to guarantee the Spanish presence there.

He could return satisfied, even though it was not actually the case; he did not return as a smug victor looking for honours. He knew very well that a hard pilgrimage lay before him and he feared that he would have to face new difficulties with the "Casa de Contratación", as indeed happened.

## X

### PEDRO MENÉNDEZ DE AVILÉS IN SPAIN. MAY 1567-JUNE 1568

#### BEFORE THE CROWN

Pedro Menéndez and his men left Florida on the 18th of May 1567. The combination of their light frigate and the favourable winds meant that they took only seventeen days to reach The Azores. From there they plotted a direct course for La Coruña so as to get to the monarch before he left for Flanders<sup>1</sup>. During the last stage of the voyage, they encountered numerous bands of pirates. Indeed, they might have met with serious misfortune for they often seemed to confuse their compatriots for these terrors of the sea.

On the 29th of June 1567 they arrived at Vivero where they were told of the impossibility of having an audience with the King, who was still at the Court. Though Menéndez felt a sense of urgency about the meeting, he saw that he had a few days to spare, so he sent the prisoners to Madrid (Rodabán and M. Enríquez) and left for his home town of Avilés to see his family.

The reception was spectacular, not only because all the people of Avilés felt proud of how much their neighbour had achieved, but one must also bear in mind that in eighteen years, Menéndez had visited

<sup>1</sup> After appointing his wife, Isabel de Valois, Regent in his absence, Philip II intended to travel to Flanders at the command of a fleet that was being made ready in Santander. He wanted to help his sister Margarita de Parma, who was Regent of the Low Countries and who had serious difficulties trying to maintain both her own power and the purity of the Catholic religion there, before the continuous revolts led by William of Orange.

his town and house on only four occasions. Even on this occasion, they were not to see much of him; his objective was to get in touch with the King as soon as possible. On the 20th of July, he arrived at Court very ostentiously, accompanied by the Indians whom he had brought with him.

But it was not only Menéndez who was seeking royal presence. France, which had of course not forgotten the events in Florida, and which tried to discredit the Adelantado in any way it could, had arranged for its ambassador, Fourquevaux, to hold an interview with the two deported Captains. Naturally, the latter's accounts were entirely negative, and not merely on a personal level. They described the situation as being chaotic, and accused Menéndez of being mad, for he forced hungry troops to stay in those conditions and under constant risk. In their descriptions and criticisms they did not conceal the fact that, in their opinion, the Adelantado's excessive interest in the whole undertaking was at least suspicious. They believed him to be motivated by personal interests and not by the notion of serving God, the Crown and Spain.

The idea began to spread in official circles of the country, thus creating a certain scepticism towards the convenience of maintaining an establishment in Florida, and there was some persistent doubt about the intentions and objectives of the Adelantado. No-one wanted to unearth the hand of France as being behind these suggestions. France after all, had already begun its revenge by supporting the rebel movements in Flanders, together with England; it was now embarking on a malicious campaign to hurl mud at the name of its greatest enemy, Pedro Menéndez de Avilés.

The Adelantado told the King about the daily events in Florida and managed to get him to promise to help. The monarch, however, told him that, because of the malicious rumours circulating about him, he had to ask him to write a memorandum so that it could be studied properly by the Royal Council of the Indies. In this way Philip II proposed to silence the voices which denounced Pedro Menéndez's impunity. At the same time, he would have as detailed a study as possible about the real needs of the enterprise, which he, of course, wanted to continue.

The Memorandum explained details of the two years stay in Florida, and tried to refute the version of the deportees. (Many other

mutineers from the forts had also fled to other places in the Indies and dedicated themselves to spreading unpleasant facts about the Adelantado, in an attempt to justify their desertion.) They insisted, furthermore, on the need to obtain more provisions for the forts, where there were only enough reserves left for three more months. They were certainly not going to be able to rely on the help of the Governor Osorio.

Pedro Menéndez was extremely critical about the Governor of Cuba. He blamed him for the discomfort of his troops and even for the uprisings which were due to the hunger and trouble to which they were subjected at the forts. For that reason he was always leading his men into desperate situations which, in other circumstances, would never have happened. Menéndez made special reference to the fact that by his departure, in spite of the difficulties of the lack of collaboration, he had managed to establish seven settlements: Tocobaga, Calusa (the Cacique Carlos), Tequesta, Ays, San Agustín, San Mateo and Santa Elena<sup>2</sup>. He had told all of them that he would get as much help as the Crown was prepared to give. He had no more private means. If he had not been rich before, he was, according to his report, much less so now. He had, after all, lost some of his ships in the undertaking, which was enormous costly. He could no longer support the burden.

The time it took to make these claims, together with Menéndez's efforts to persuade the Company of Jesus to send more missionaries to Florida was such that they stayed in Spain much longer than they had planned. They knew that their presence in those territories had put a stop to uprisings, up until then. He was trusting in the ability of the "Alcaides" at the forts, but his long absence and the distance began to concern him. Above all, he had not forgotten that he had left a powerful enemy, Saturiba, in their midst.

The King entrusted Florencio Esquivel and Andrés de Equino with his far-reaching study of the two years that he had spent in Florida (1565-1567), in which he was able to prove that he lacked funds, so that he could not leave Spain until he had paid his debts. The Adelantado's departure was delayed again, since he then went to Sevilla with all his ships and the provisions for Florida. Menéndez and

<sup>2</sup> A. Manucy, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

Baltasar del Castillo, his treasurer, had been in serious difficulties to justify their costs which they claimed to cut the debt they had with the authorities. They even had to resort to sending out letters of credit<sup>3</sup>.

Menéndez had reached the most critical moment of his career. His personal honour, political prestige, and even his return to Florida were at stake. In September 1567, the troops were in Sevilla, and were not able to receive any payment until the Adelantado had resolved his debts. They were therefore in a lamentable condition, which was brought to the notice of the King: «[...] they walk around the city hungry and naked [...]»<sup>4</sup>.

The King remedied the situation once again. He ordered Francisco Duarte to spend 8,780,000 maravedís on clothes and food in the month of November and December 1567. The "Casa de Contratación" was to pay 2,076,336 maravedís on other costs which might spring up at the moment of departure. In all, this expedition, which lost one of its ships and arrived at San Agustín on the 17th of July 1568, came to cost a total of 10,800,000 maravedís<sup>5</sup>. The monarch also took a series of measures which no-one disputed, but which seriously worried the authorities. It seemed to them that Menéndez enjoyed excessive influence with the monarch, as indeed he had done for years. It might seem that it was like this, but the reality was that Philip II managed his empire personally. He chose the people he thought to be most capable to guarantee the stability of his territories, and he did not pay much attention to his councillors who advised against a particular strategy. This occurred with Pedro Menéndez; it also happened with Don Juan de Austria<sup>6</sup>, when he put him in charge of the Armada which was to meet the Turks in Lepanto, in spite of his inexperience and extreme youth. Time would show the critics of these decisions that the monarch had not been mistaken.

Of all the things that he had achieved from his mission to the Court, what must have given him most satisfaction was doubtless not

<sup>3</sup> E. Lyon, *op. cit.*, pp. 411-421.

<sup>4</sup> E. Ruidíaz Caravia, *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 170-171. Letter from Pedro Menéndez to the King written in Sevilla on the 23rd of September 1567.

<sup>5</sup> P.E. Hoffman, *op. cit.*, p. 259.

<sup>6</sup> Juan de Austria was Philip II's step-brother and the illegitimate son of Charles V.

only the fact that his greatest enemy in the halls of power, García Osorio, the then Governor of Cuba, had been displaced from office, but that he himself was appointed to that very office. He had never hidden his antipathy for Osorio, whom he blamed for the hardship which both he and his men were undergoing in Florida. It must therefore have been a moment of great joy when he was able to boast of this appointment, thus implying that his complaints were justified and that García Osorio had not served the orders of the monarch as he had so often made out. Menendez came to be Governor of Cuba without losing his titles in Florida<sup>7</sup>.

On the 3rd of November 1567, he was made Captain General of the Armada which was composed of two galleons and made in Vizcaya. This was for purposes of the defense of the Indian coasts against the presence of pirates of any nationality who might endanger Spanish activity. At the same time, the Presidents and the "Oidores" of the "Audiencia Real" at La Española, and all the Governors and Judges of the cities, towns and other places on those islands were ordered to give as much help as was necessary. The accountant and the treasurer were even told that the payroll of the both sailors and expeditionaries should be signed by Menéndez<sup>8</sup>. Juan Martínez de Recalde also journeyed in this fleet. Apart from the importance that this title brought in itself, giving him the right to intervene in all trading matters in the area, it also bolstered the oft-disputed honour of the Adelantado.

On the 9th of February 1568, the Royal Council of the Indies, having studied the Memorandum, decided to pay Pedro Menéndez part of the losses which he had claimed, though they would not give the whole quantity that he had asked for. It is not that the Council had changed its opinion about Menéndez, but the fact was that once the Adelantado's evidence about the costs he had had in Florida was presented before the judges, it was rumoured that the ruling would fall in his favour, as in fact happened. On the 10th of April 1568 it was ruled that the King, and his attorney, should, in the space of ten days, pay the Adelantado five hundred ducados and a certain amount of provisions<sup>9</sup>. Soon, and to the great satisfaction of Philip II, the

<sup>7</sup> E. Lyon, *op. cit.*, p. 191.

<sup>8</sup> A.C.R., leg. 2, n.º 3, A. 6.

<sup>9</sup> A.C.R., leg. 47, n.º 1.



sentence was passed. On the 31st of May 1568, he issued a Royal decree asking the officials of "Tierra Firme" to give him, or his treasurer, as many provisions, munitions and other goods as were demanded of them<sup>10</sup>. A few months afterwards (in June), the King, who was going through the most difficult year of his reign, in which he suffered the death of his controversial son Don Carlos (his only son) and that of his wife, the Infanta Isabel de Valois. In addition he had to attend to one of the most serious events of his reign, the rising of the "moriscos" in Granada, quite apart from Florida. He therefore ordered that the ships that were kept in Sevilla should set off immediately for Florida. To the Adelantado, in thanks for his services, he gave the "Santa Cruz de la Zarza" and an additional hundred thousand ducados.

#### IN SEARCH OF MISSIONARIES

During his stay in Spain, in spite of the personal and economic problems that he found, Menéndez had not forgotten another priority: to persuade Jesuit fathers to come. Francisco de Borja did not want to send more monks, in spite of the fact that Menéndez denied the sinister news that had been arriving from Florida. He assured them that every day that he delayed his departure, souls were being sold to the devil. Finally, Menéndez's pressure bore fruit. In spite of how appalled they had been by the loss of Father Martínez, Father Francisco Borja authorized the sending of the Fathers Juan Bautista Segura, Gonzalo del Álamo and Antonio Sedeño, together with the brothers Juan de la Carrera, Pedro de Linares and Domingo Agustín among other priests. They all set off from Sanlúcar on the 13th of March 1568. When they reached the Canaries (on the 17th of April), the sources of replenishment that they found on these islands, meant that they stayed there much longer than they had forseen<sup>11</sup>.

The decisive factor, which finally convinced the "Vicario General", was not in fact the continuous pressure from the King and Menéndez.

<sup>10</sup> A.C.R. leg. 2, n.º 3; A.C.R., leg. 50, n.º 1

<sup>11</sup> F.J. Alegre, *op. cit.*

It was an idea dreamed up by the Adelantado: remembering the great educational tradition of the Jesuits, he proposed creating a college in Havana, which the children of the Caciques would attend. This would be a most effective way of disseminating the Catholic religion because, if one could convert the younger members of the Cacique's family, their example would soon be imitated by the rest of the tribe.

With this project, one can observe how Pedro Menéndez had his own ideas as to the role of religion and the Church in the New World: the conversions of the Indians to Christianity, and its contribution to political stability. He was in no doubt that in order to spread the Christian message properly, one had to kill those who had come there with other religious notions (the Huguenots for instance). The idea of stepping up religious activity in order to set up greater political stability in Florida, led him to change the traditional concept of the missionary.

The creation of this catholic college, whose ranks would be filled by Jesuit monks, shows how Menéndez saw the missionaries as something rather more than savers of souls. The young would be taught, and then proceed to set an example to their tribes. If there were ever a conflict with the great caciques, they would certainly be affected by the fact that their own sons were beyond the sea, and under the control of the Spaniards.

While he was organizing all of this, the task of those missionaries who had stayed in Florida was becoming more and more problematic, in spite of how hard they tried. The soldiers' position at the forts was so desperate that the missionaries' main problem came to be to try to alleviate their plight. They had to keep the peace, to raise the spirits and to watch over the minds of these traumatized people. This was hard enough, but the conditions that the missionaries were living in was also somewhat gruelling: they had to approach the Indians, to learn their languages and their customs, and to conquer their souls. They also suffered the hunger and the misery to which the Spaniards in Florida seemed endlessly condemned. One can therefore appreciate the size of their sacrifice.

The Caciques did not convert with the ease that they had once promised the «white chiefs» which they had partly done no doubt because they feared not to do so. As soon as the Spaniards left, it was clear that they had been somewhat deceived. Neither their messages, nor their calls were fully heeded. They made not the slightest effort to

understand them and the missionaries' work seemed so fruitless that the Captains feared that they would go off and abandon the project<sup>12</sup>. So both the missionaries and the troops did not achieve much in spiritual terms, but the results had not been more encouraging when the monks had done so alone. The missionaries' censorious attitude to some of their ancestral customs, such as polygamy and polytheism, raised insuperable barriers between them. The Indians kept up their traditions even after being voluntarily baptised. The monks therefore sometimes refused to baptize them until they had abandoned these practices once and for all. If this were not enough, the Florida Indian had a profound sense of liberty and individualism which it was difficult to rein in with the teaching of Catholic principles.

In Spain, it was not only the Jesuits who seemed to be reluctant to send monks: other voices also spoke up to question the sense in sacrificing lives there, when other areas, which had been fully conquered and pacified needed the assistance of monks as well. Their efforts were bound to be put to better use in these latter places.

After much effort, it seemed that Menéndez was controlling matters and that everything that he had wanted to settle in Spain he had dealt with. He had brought reinforcements, García Osorio had been removed from their midst, his debts had, for the moment, been covered, more Jesuits had been sent and he continued relying on the unconditional support of the Crown. He had even increased his power with the two new titles of Captain General of the Armada and Governor of the island of Cuba. He could well feel satisfied in spite of the events that were taking place in Florida in his absence.

#### THE FRENCH REVENGE

It has already been shown how the news of what had happened to the compatriots which had greatly affected France, was not given the official Spanish attention that the French had hoped for. This attitude unleashed a furious desire for revenge amongst some

<sup>12</sup> F. Zubillaga, *op. cit.*

Frenchmen. With or without official backing, they did not want this humiliation to go unpunished.

Dominique de Gourgues had been born in Mont de Marsan in 1530. He was a protestant, though he came from a Catholic family. He had fought in Italy and, once captured by the Spaniards, had been condemned to the gallows like his brother Ogier; they had both been taken prisoner in the war in Florence<sup>13</sup>. This French noble, who would be erected as a symbol of national dignity, found that Menéndez's absence from Florida gave him a fine opportunity to return.

It was necessary to keep this voyage secret, for if the Adelantado were to receive news of it, he would surely hurry back and the situation would be a great deal more complicated. Not even the members of the expedition knew where they were going, much less what it was all about. Apparently the small group was heading for the coasts of Africa to find blacks slaves<sup>14</sup>. The troops were not told of the true motive of the trip until they were closing in on Cuba.

With his own personal fortunes, and the money that he was able to obtain from friends and sympathizers with the cause, he organized an expedition made up of three boats and a hundred and fifty men, led by the Captain Cazenove and his lieutenant Francis Bourdelois. The small group left Bourdeaux on the 22nd of August 1567 with one objective in mind: to restore French honour and to punish Spanish audacity. It was a tough voyage, and they took eight months to reach the coast of Florida, which they finally did in April 1568 close to the mouth of the river San Juan. Gourgues was in a hurry to act and he feared being discovered, though when they passed some Spanish ships they were confused for compatriots and were hailed as such. It was easy to think that they might be followed, seeing as they had not stopped, for the Spaniards might then decide, on second thoughts, to ascertain their nationality or make sure that they were not pirates.

Once they reached the site where Fort Carolina had been built, and when the Indians came out to meet them, Gourgues explained that he had come to liberate them from Spanish dominion, and that he would leave once he had done so and let them be. The Spaniards were

<sup>13</sup> Ch. Lowery Woodbury, *op. cit.*, vol. II. pp. 324-325.

<sup>14</sup> Ch. Lowery Woodbury, *op. cit.*, vol. II. p. 325.

unlucky in that this first encounter took place with the Saturiba Indians, the only ones with whom they were in conflict. The Adelantado had been worried about leaving this potencial enemy and his fears were now confirmed.

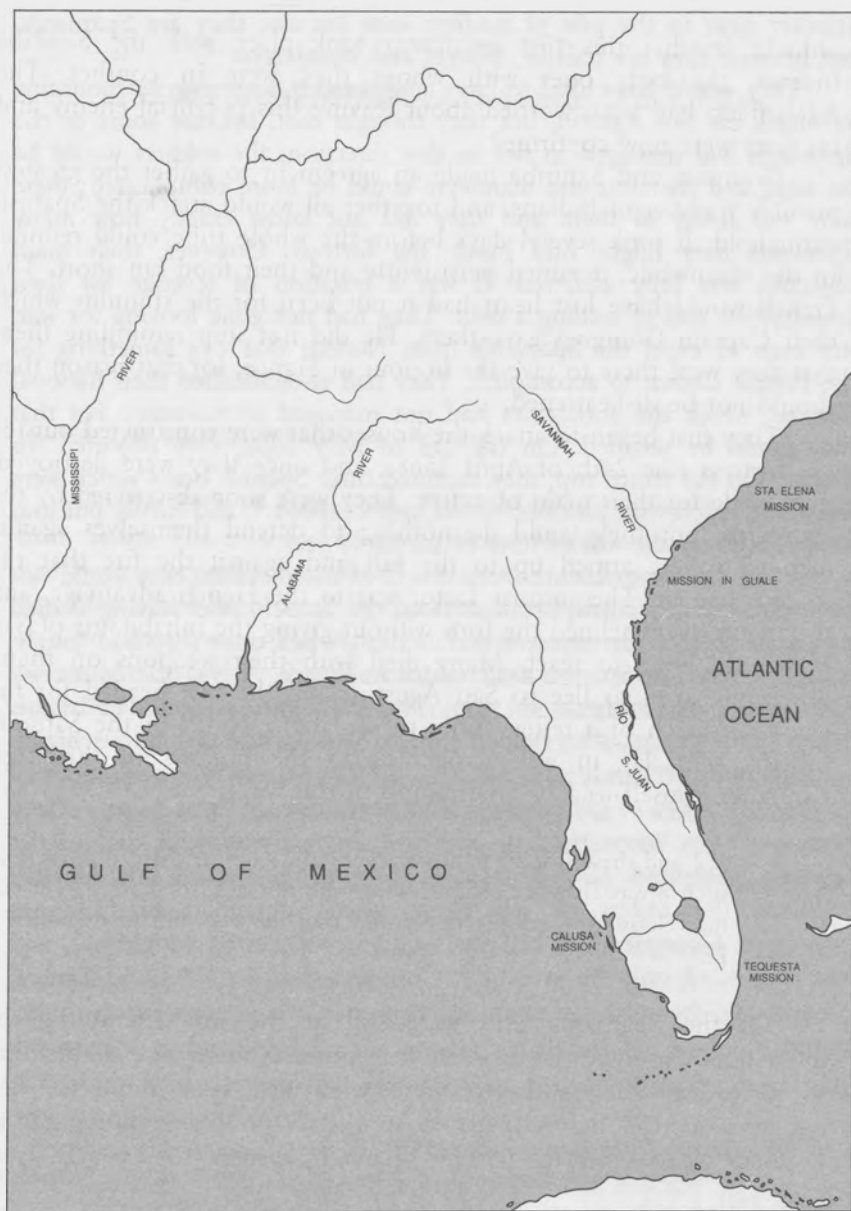
Gourgues and Saturiba made an agreement to gather the greatest possible number of Indians, and together all would attack the Spanish stronghold. It took several days before the whole tribe could reunite. In the meanwhile, it rained persistently and their food ran short. The French would have lost heart had it not been for the stimulus which their Captain Gourgues gave them. He did not stop reminding them that they were there to save the honour of France; for that reason they should not be disheartened.

They first began to attack the houses that were constructed outside the fortress (the 24th of April 1568), and once they were destroyed, they made for their main objective. They were soon discovered by the Spaniards, but they could do nothing to defend themselves against men who were armed up to the hilt and against the fire that the Indians had lit. The surprise factor was to the French advantage, and they soon overwhelmed the fort, without giving the inhabitants of San Mateo the time to react. Many died with their weapons on them, others managed to flee to San Agustín, and the rest headed for the wood in search of a refuge, only to die at the hands of the Saturiba Indians, who lay in wait, crouching in the hollows of the trees. Gourgues himself told of his triumph in this way:

[...] and these (the French) witnessing the exodus, charged at them in such a way that few escaped who were not dead or hung [...] it was marvelous how quickly one could take the fort and to demolish it [...] <sup>15</sup>.

Of the Spaniards who were still at the fort attempting the impossible, Gourgues gave orders to capture as many as possible alive so as to be able to do to them what had been done to their countrymen years before (24th of April). In fact all were hung, and in response to the message left by Menéndez's men, the French wrote

<sup>15</sup> D. de Gourgues, «Reprise de La Florida», in *Histoire Méorable*, Paris, 1586. Both texts are collected in the new edition of the book by E. Ruidíaz Caravia, *Conquista y colonización de La Florida por Pedro Menéndez de Avilés*, Madrid, 1988, p. 782.



The locations of the missions in Florida in Pedro Menéndez de Avilés' time

another next to the pile of bodies: «not because they are Spaniards, but because they are traitors, thieves and murderers»<sup>16</sup>.

They would have liked to have completed this revenge by mounting an attack on San Agustín, but they thought that, because some of the Spaniards had managed to flee in that direction, the soldiers would be on alert, and therefore the manoeuvre could be more complicated: there were not many of them and they did not know exactly how many Spaniards they might find inside the fortress. However, their main objective was fully achieved. It was a question of revenge for their countrymen and of settling a debt. They had not gone looking for war, nor even to expel the Spaniards from Florida; that was something for the French Crown to accomplish. They had re-established their national honour, which the authorities had not managed to maintain. For that they could be satisfied. On the 3rd of May 1568, they departed for France. On the return trip, they captured three Spanish boats which were returning, laden with precious metals and weapons<sup>17</sup>, and finally put into La Rochelle on the 6th of June of the same year.

Once the Spanish authorities heard of these events, they could not hope for any official explanation from the French, after having denied giving the French government such a thing when once they had sought it themselves. The Spanish ambassador in France, Álava, offered money for the life of Gourgues in vain. The latter was safeguarded by his many sympathisers, who helped him to live for the rest of his life in semi-clandestine conditions. He also, of course, enjoyed the approval of the authorities of his country, who never did anything to try to find him. Later on, some tried to compare this activity with that of the Spanish Adelantado, but Menéndez categorically denied this. He had followed the orders of his King, which defended his religious principles. Gourgues had behaved as an unauthorized adventurer, and was motivated only by cruelty<sup>18</sup>. Gourgues died in 1593 and France, even today, treasures his memory as one of the bravest men in her history<sup>19</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> Ch. Lowery Woodbury, *op. cit.*, p. 333.

<sup>17</sup> H.E. Bolton, *Spanish Borderlands, a chronicle of old Florida and the Southwest*, Toronto, 1921, p. 138.

<sup>18</sup> G.R. Fairbanks, *History and Antiquities of the city of Saint Augustine*, Gainesville, 1975, p. 107.

<sup>19</sup> Historical Collections of Louisiana and Florida, vol. 22, pp. 265-266.



## XI

### PEDRO MENÉNDEZ'S LAST STAGE IN FLORIDA

#### DECEPTION; LIMITED MISSIONARY ACTIVITY

On the 29th of June 1568, Pedro Menéndez returned to Florida from Spain. The situation he encountered was desolating: the missions had been practically abandoned owing to Indian pressure, the fort at San Mateo had been razed by the French and the other fortresses were in a precarious state. The Adelantado was prepared to begin again, for he could not believe that Florida, his life's aim, could end up in this way after all his sacrifices and dreams. He would make every effort, but the situation had changed; from now on, Havana, the key to the Caribbean, would demand all his attention and time. That he had been made Governor of the island made him proud but it stopped him from dedicating his time to Florida. The completion of the fortress in Havana and the setting up of the Jesuit college there were now urgent responsibilities.

Florida would resent that, and in spite of the fact that Menéndez continued his life obsessed by the place, it would not be enough. His physical presence was necessary, for none of his officials had his experience, or his vision for the project, much less his prestige amongst the troops and the Indians. The work he had achieved in three years would soon be undone.

Even the missions, which the Adelantado had prepared with great care, had been unable to get going properly. The mission at Tocobaga retired when the soldiers abandoned it. In Tequesta they had had to move because of Indian pressure from beyond the parameters of the mission (4th of April 1568). Father Segura, who had arrived at Havana

on the 9th of June 1568, was the only one who was able to do the work with any skill. He wanted to go to Florida however, which was the real objective of his voyage. He therefore left Father Rogel, with the Brothers Villarreal, Juan de la Carrera and J. Salcedo in Havana to look after the school; he sent Father Gonzalo del Álamo to the Cacique Carlos, and Father Antonio Sedeño to Guale. Then he and Pedro Menéndez set off for Tequesta <sup>1</sup>.

It turned out to be difficult to find a place where they could be sure of success. So they opted for Guale and Santa Elena. There, the work they did was important, above all when they had to face an epidemic which was raging round the town. Among the Spanish victims were the brother Domingo Agustín who had a great gift for languages and was extremely practical. He had mastered the Saturiba language so finely that he was able to translate the catechism into it <sup>2</sup>.

On the 25th of July 1568, the brother Villarreal wrote to Francisco de Borja to tell him how difficult it was to keep his work going. The Indians moved every season in search of food and he could not go after them: «[...] at this time most of the Indians went to eat, and not more than thirty people stayed» <sup>3</sup>. On their return, the months of work had been lost and the Indians had forgotten what had taken him so much effort to teach them. In this case the reference was to one missionary, but one must remember that all monks underwent a similar fate in Florida. There were no stable towns and this made it impossible to live with them continuously, which doubtless would have facilitated the teaching process. They approached the missions when they happened to be nearby, but this was for never more than a few months a year, sometimes only a few weeks.

From this moment onwards, Menéndez's life would consist of endless comings and goings from the Indies to Spain, always in search of help for Havana and Florida. The "Asiento" signed with the King in 1565 had come to an end, after the three years were up. Given the bad relations with the authorities, he asked the monarch for the instructions to be transmitted via Royal Warrants. Thus it would be

<sup>1</sup> F.J. Alegre, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

<sup>2</sup> F.J. Alegre, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

<sup>3</sup> R. Vargas Ugarte, *op. cit.*, pp. 28-90.

done, and this second stage of the Adelantado's time in Florida is consequently known about exclusively through the private correspondence between the King and Menéndez. Philip II liked to give all his instructions and even his advice in writing, and thanks to the extreme order which he imposed at Court we have been able to get to know many interesting details about his empire.

In Havana, Menéndez founded the college for the sons of Caciques (1569), which awoke many expectations. He made Father Rogel the Rector and Brother Villarreal was made his assistant. On the 25th of April 1569, he sent Esteban de las Alas to Florida with two hundred and seventy-three people for the fort of San Felipe (Santa Elena) and that at San Agustín, and on the 22nd of July of the same year he returned to Spain to look for more people and more help.

LONG DELAY IN SPAIN. 22ND JULY 1569-12TH JULY 1571

His fortune had been mortgaged and he did not now want to resort to asking the King directly, for he knew that no-one influential was very interested in the whole affair. The King was increasingly prevailed upon not to attend to Menéndez's requests. Faced with such a lack of interest in Florida, the Adelantado tried, in any way he could, to show that it was worth continuing, if only for its prize security position for protecting the ships which returned from the Caribbean to Spain. The "Casa de Contratación" continued not to trust him. They were always raising obstacles to the sending of help, claiming even the smallest legal requirement for their troops. In addition, they delayed any authorization that had to come from them.

On the 20th of August 1569, Diego Flores de Valdés reached Spain in search of more provisions. In a short time, Bartolomé Menéndez also returned with news that the situation in the forts had reached such an extreme that mutinies were regular occurrences. The bitterness with which the Adelantado received this news was evident in some of his reports to the King:

[...] and to get the boats ready, we need money, and I do not have it, nor do I have credit to look for it. Nor can Pedro del Castillo find

any, and since it is the responsibility of the officials to do it, as Your Majesty orders, they do not do it<sup>4</sup>.

In spite of the fact that in February of the same year, the Crown had issued a Royal Warrant obliging the officials of the "Casa de Contratación" to help him in all things, help was still not forthcoming. On the contrary: every time the occasion arose, they alleged that their accounts were not straight. What they really were after was to embargo the Adelantado's goods.

This did not seem to influence Philip II who continued to help him. On the 10th of October 1569, he dictated a Royal Warrant specifying that it should be him, as Captain General of the Armada, and no-one else, who should sign all documents<sup>5</sup>. On the 20th of November, he issued another warrant, by which the officials at the "Casa de Contratación", Florencio de Esquivel and Baltasar del Castillo should take twenty thousand ducados for the purposes of helping Menéndez<sup>6</sup>.

That same day, the Adelantado had written to the King<sup>7</sup>, criticising the delay of the 'Casa de Contratación' in preparing the food for the fleet which was to leave from Sevilla; this had meant that he had had to pay for their maintenance in the meantime out of his own pocket. Their salaries had not even arrived, and Menéndez feared that if the money did not arrive, none of his men would re-embark. Furthermore it would be difficult to find other people if it was known that the previous crew had not been paid.

The correspondence was repeated on the 24th and 27th of November, and the 4th of December from Sevilla, and the 31st of December from Cádiz<sup>8</sup>. In all these letters, he explained about the news that his brother Bartolomé had sent to Esteban de las Alas. The latter informed him that, when one of the "Casa de Contratación's" ships had arrived, such was the desire with which the food was awaited,

<sup>4</sup> E. Ruidiaz Caravia, *La Florida, su conquista y colonización por Pedro Menéndez de Avilés*, Madrid, 1892, vol. II, pp. 182-183.

<sup>5</sup> A.C.R., leg. 2, n.º 18.

<sup>6</sup> A.C.R., leg. 2, n.º 19.

<sup>7</sup> E. Ruidiaz Caravia, *op. cit.*, pp. 185-189.

<sup>8</sup> E. Ruidiaz Caravia, *op. cit.*, pp. 189-200.

that they were going to leave it outside the harbour, because of the possibility of the ship being plundered and even robbed so anxious were these wretches to return to Spain. As the salaries continued not to materialize, some sailors in the Armada left the city, having lost hope that they would ever receive their due. This fact proved exceedingly damaging to Menéndez. Though he always defended the honour of his men, alleging that they were noble people and that they acted in this way only because of the bad treatment that they had been subjected to, he did, all the same, betray the first signs of discouragement and sadness. For instance, he wrote to the King at this time about the officials at the "Casa de Contratación" and the men of the Armada in the following way: «I am fed up with both of them, for I see that they do nothing for me, and since I have no money, they do still less»<sup>9</sup>.

They might have recruited foreigners, seeing as there were so many desertions, but this was something that the Adelantado did not even want to hear; he had spent many years fighting to avoid their presence in the Indies, and in no way was he going to take them with him now, even if they came under the Spanish flag. He preferred deception as a means of roping in the numbers. He assured them that Esteban de las Alas and his nephew Diego de Ribera, both men of high prestige, would be Captains on the next expedition, even though he knew full well that neither of them would be going.

It worried him so much to think of what was happening at the forts that he asked for permission to send a ship with supplies, independently of the 'Casa de Contratación'. After all, in the six years that he had had to send launch boats without a license he had not used this privilege once in the three that had gone by<sup>10</sup>. The royal officials, Juan de Abadía in particular, denied him this permission. He also knew that several Frenchmen from Gourgues' expedition had stayed behind in Florida to preach their religious creed. Nothing was more alarming to the Adelantado than this news, and he asked them to be swift in allowing him to return.

<sup>9</sup> E. Ruidíaz Caravia, *op. cit.*, pp. 185-189. Pedro Menéndez's letter of November 1570.

<sup>10</sup> E. Ruidíaz Caravia, *op. cit.*, pp. 203-212. Pedro Menéndez's letter from Cádiz, of the 4th of January 1570.

In 1570, Philip II tried not only to control the costs of the Florida undertaking, which were increasingly high, but also to intervene in the eternal dispute between the officials of the "Casa de Contratación" and Pedro Menéndez. For this he issued three Royal Warrants in which he ordered that everything that had set off for Spain without licence should be handed over to the treasurer and that a report on the costs should be made, not only on behalf of the Adelantado, but also to the officials of Sevilla. In addition it was prohibited for the officials to vex Menéndez under any circumstances<sup>11</sup>. On the 23rd of August 1570, another Royal Warrant demanded that the officials of Menéndez's army make a report of the costs which they had had when they accompanied the fleets from Tierra Firme to New Spain<sup>12</sup>.

Philip II had not lost his faith in the Adelantado, for he knew of his gifts as a sailor, above all when he was leading some expedition or fulfilling some mission, however arduous it might turn out to be. However, the evidence of his poor administration was such that he decided to administer the finances in Florida himself, directly from Spain. He was disposed to help, but he was aware that bad administration had to be avoided if his help was to be effective. Pedro Menéndez was needed in Florida as well as in Havana, and he was prepared to maintain him there even against the advice of all his councillors and officials.

On the 2nd of November 1570, the Crown sent 1,000 shirts, 1,000 sandals, 500 'zaragüellas', 500 jackets and 500 caps and hats to Florida. This cost a total of 1,379,411 maravedís, and the cargo left at the beginning of March 1571. Menéndez also took a hundred and fifty soldiers to replace those that were in Florida. The costs of these new recruits rose to 1,258,190 maravedís. This turned out to be one of the last expeditions to Florida<sup>13</sup>. On the 15th of November 1570 it was decreed that the troops in Florida, Havana and the Royal Navy should be paid a subsidy which, for the hundred and fifty soldiers, came to a total of 7,551,225 maravedís, in terms of salaries, rations and allowances<sup>14</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> A.C.R., leg. 2, n.<sup>os</sup> 14, 17 and 22.

<sup>12</sup> A.C.R., leg. 2, n.<sup>o</sup> 20.

<sup>13</sup> P.E. Hoffman, *op. cit.*, p. 258.

<sup>14</sup> P.E. Hoffman, *op. cit.*, p. 260.



Meanwhile, on the 3rd of November, Esteban de las Alas and Captain Francisco Núñez had reached Spain. When Philip II heard the news, he became concerned that people were returning in hordes from Florida. That same day he made some enquiries to ascertain on whose orders they had left, and as to the well-being of those who were still at the forts. He was concerned that there were not enough Captains or soldiers left there in the event of conflict with the Indians. On the 10th of November negotiations between the officials and the judges of the "Casa de Contratación" to try to resolve the truth of the royal enquiries began. They ended on the 24th of the same month. They interrogated various people who had come in the fleet. It was discovered that some one hundred and ten people had arrived under the captaincy of Esteban de las Alas in the ship *Espíritu Santo* from the port of San Agustín. Not all the soldiers came from that fort; they had been to collect some from Santa Elena. A minimum of fifty soldiers stayed at each fort; the others could return if they so wished since there was no authority actually restraining them. In spite of that, those who had stayed on in Florida had been obliged to stay at their posts.

The enquiries also ascertained that a nephew of the Adelantado, with the same name, Pedro Menéndez de Avilés was now captain at San Agustín<sup>15</sup> while Juan de Labandera occupied that position at Santa Elena. They were unable to say how much munition was left, but what they did say was that there was an almost total lack of food. To supplement their rations, they used to have to fish, which left them vulnerable to attack from the Indians. These details did not actually reveal anything startlingly new; all the reports which arrived from Florida had talked of hunger, suffering and the defencelessness of the forts<sup>16</sup>.

On the 19th of November 1570, Philip II arranged that Menéndez should not intervene in the finances which were under the charge of the treasurer of the Armada; nor should he involve himself with the provisions that had been given to the "Maestres" of the ships, without warning the officials of the fleet beforehand<sup>17</sup>. Under the same set of

<sup>15</sup> He was the nephew of Alvar, the brother of the Adelantado. See the family tree in appendix VI.

<sup>16</sup> Codoíno, tome XIII, p. 309.

<sup>17</sup> A.C.R., leg. 2, n.º 24.



instructions, it was settled that Florencio de Esquivel, treasurer of the Navy, would give the Adelantado eight hundred ducados with which to equip the fifty soldiers who would pursue the pirates with Esteban de las Alas.

The Adelantado did not know what to do to get hold of the money that would allow him to leave Spain as soon as possible. Given that his frigate, the *Espíritu Santo* was in Cádiz, he proposed that the King lend him eight hundred ducats to send to Havana, with the promise that he would return them as soon as he got the money from Tierra Firme and New Spain; in this way he would gain time, at no cost to the Crown<sup>18</sup>.

The scarcity of men and money for Florida's development, together with the arguments at the "Casa de Contratación", were continuous, reoccurring themes in Menéndez's life during these years. Difficulties began to increase when news started to arrive in Spain about the situation at the forts. For from then on, no-one had the least desire to go there; indeed, they had to force those there to stay at their posts. They would resort to almost anything to avoid desertions and Menéndez was forced to pay the salaries of the Armada. He agreed to pay half before departing and the other half when they were on the high seas or on arrival at their destination. It seemed that otherwise he would not get a crew to embark in any other way, particularly now that his word was no longer sufficient to stir them.

He also asked the King to give him the authority to obtain rations for the ships on the Canary islands where products were generally cheaper than on the peninsula. They were sold at their real price rather than for a hefty profit. To carry out this operation, it was suggested that the Crown send an official to avoid misunderstandings, for it might be thought otherwise that they were arranging personal deals in these transactions<sup>19</sup>.

Apart from the financial difficulties which the "Casa de Contratación" had always had, it became clear that when it concerned Menéndez, their problems seemed to increase; surely there was some

<sup>18</sup> E. Ruidíaz Caravia, *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 203-212. Letter from Pedro Menéndez de Avilés to the King from Sevilla, dated the 3rd of December 1570.

<sup>19</sup> E. Ruidíaz Caravia, *op. cit.*, pp. 203-212.

deception? Since he had become Governor, Havana was much less well equipped than before, from a financial point of view. Menéndez drew attention to this in the following way: "Under former Governors, six thousand ducats were dished out for the upkeep of the fortress; since I have occupied the post, nothing has come my way in this respect"<sup>20</sup>.

#### FATHER SEGURA'S EXPEDITION AND THE LEAVING OF THE JESUITS

Independently of all these administrative and bureaucratic problems, the monks continued their activity, which was as intense as it was fruitless. Meanwhile, they doubtless continued to suffer. In September 1570, Father Segura, who had been encouraged by information from Captain Juan Pardo, decided to head inland to the north of Santa Elena. The others in the group were Father Quirós, the Brothers Gabriel Gómez, Sancho Ceballos, Juan Bautista Menéndez, Pedro Linares, Gabriel de Solís and Cristóbal Redondo, as well as a boy called Alonso<sup>21</sup>.

On the 11th, they reached the area of Axacan, their destination. Father Segura said goodbye to the soldiers who had accompanied him, with orders not to return until four months were up, for they had been very well received and the prospects were favourable. Don Luis, a cousin of the Caciques's was also with them; he had been a pupil at the Jesuit college in Havana, and had become a Christian. But once Don Luis was back with his own folk, he did nothing to assist their conversion; furthermore, he himself led the march against the mission that was to kill the entire troupe of missionaries. Only the child Alonso was saved. When the four months had passed (in January 1571), the soldiers returned and the boy described what had happened.

The Jesuits' beginning had been hard enough with the death of Father Menéndez, but this further, multiple sacrifice persuaded the Company to take its leave of Florida, at least for the time being. If Francisco de Borja's was disgusted at the cruel fate of Father Segura

<sup>20</sup> E. Ruidíaz Caravia, *op. cit.*, pp. 213-220.

<sup>21</sup> F.J. Alegre, *op. cit.*, p. 75; M. Gannon, *op. cit.*, p. 34; F. Zubillaga, *op. cit.*, p. 611.

and his companions, Pedro Menéndez was genuinely furious. When he returned two years later, in 1572, he sent orders that the same number of Indians be hung as monks had been murdered. It had cost him so much to persuade priests to come to Florida that he could not accept that their deaths had been in vain. Pessimism dominated the mood and only Pedro Menéndez, who had even moved his entire family to Santa Elena, seemed to be interested in staying. The missionaries abandoned Florida in 1572 for Mexico. Zubillaga justifies their decision in the following way:

The missionary effort in North America at the time was confounded by a number of factors: the French offensive, the consequent Spanish, political and military designs in that immense continent, the poverty of the land and the character of the Indians <sup>22</sup>.

The departure of the missionaries was a serious setback for the Adelantado, who could see that his dream was now adrift, particularly when he had to face various veiled accusations from the Company over the amount of assistance he had given the missionaries. They had, after all, made an immense sacrifice, which cost many their lives.

The Jesuits did not return until 1743, when they were more effective in achieving Pedro Menéndez's dreams: that of "Christianizing Florida".

[...] the land was hard and insalubrious, and the adventurers had to put up with it, without achieving anything for God or King <sup>23</sup>.

Only a year afterwards, the Franciscans arrived. But they had to cope with an even more complex situation than their predecessors had had. The Adelantado's successors had not continued his policy of attending to good relations with the Indians and their chiefs. They felt rejected, and the Spaniards began to inspire violent emotions in them, even hatred. This meant that it was practically impossible even to approach them. Only the knowledge that he was not alone in aspiring to make Florida Christian kept the Adelantado going. In 1573, the

<sup>22</sup> F. Zubillaga, *op. cit.*

<sup>23</sup> G.J. Keegan, *op. cit.*

King dispatched a Royal Warrant in his favour, that had been conceded through the Pope in the Bull, the "Santa Cruzada" for the Indies<sup>24</sup>.

#### ECONOMIC PROBLEMS AND FINANCIAL CHAOS

Returning to matters of a political and economic nature, in the first months of 1571 the situation varied very little. Pedro Menéndez, who was still in Spain, received a Royal Warrant, saying that his Navy should install a large trunk in which gold and silver for the Navy would be stored. There would be three keys: one should be for the Adelantado, one for the Treasurer and the third for the Accountant<sup>25</sup>. Though this new attitude showed that the Crown was exercising greater control financial matters, the King continued to help him, and on the 11th of April 1571, he again ordered that the "Casa de Contratación" should give the fleet all that it might need<sup>26</sup>. The despair, the needs and the continuous confrontations with the authorities led Menéndez, after he had had to suffer his ships being searched by the officials of the "Casa de Contratación", to warn the King that he would not tolerate similar action again if it was not accompanied by a royal order<sup>27</sup>.

His efforts to recruit people proved not to be enough to put together a crew for a whole fleet. The fleet did, however, set off from Sanlúcar on the 16th of May 1571 with only seven galleons, which was all he could manage with the amount of volunteers he had been able to rattle up. The expedition reached Havana on the 3rd of July 1571 with many its inmates ill. As soon as he had arrived in Florida (on the 12th of July), he informed the King about the urgency of aid being brought. There was the ever present danger of pirates and they had no protection in the event of an attack from that quarter. He also mentioned his other needs for Havana, and he asked permission to

<sup>24</sup> A.C.R., leg. 2, n.º 51.

<sup>25</sup> A.C.R., leg. 2, n.º 32.

<sup>26</sup> A.C.R., leg. 2, n.º 37.

<sup>27</sup> E. Ruidíaz Caravia, *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 222-224. Letter from Pedro Menéndez de Avilés to the King from Sanlúcar, dated the 15th of May 1571.

fund them through selling slaves<sup>28</sup>. In the 'Asiento' signed in 1565, he had been given the right to transport five hundred to Florida<sup>29</sup>, and he had never made use of this right, but as the agreement had already expired, it seemed appropriate to seek permission again.

In Santa Elena, his fears were confirmed about the harmful influence of the new religion: the Indians were now divided as to whether they supported the French or the Spaniards. They had to try and lure them as they were and in spite of the unpleasant time they were having at the forts. Menéndez sent three ships to obtain flour and biscuits, which he distributed to the Indians who had remained loyal, as a reward. This measure was as bold as it was necessary by Menéndez's standards. He had always maintained that one could not stay in Florida, or for that matter, anywhere in the Indies, without the support and some collaboration with the Indians. He spent much time and effort trying to make sure that this was the case.

Religious activity continued to languish to the frustration of many. On the 10th of December 1570, Father Rogel wrote:

[...] To be successful with the blind and the deaf in this province, it is necessary, first to meet the Indians who live in the towns and to collect food for a year. In spite of that, the monks who stayed amongst them for more than thirty years, obtained no more rewards than we have done in these four years<sup>30</sup>.

In spite of this information, they still did not stop listening to the Adelantado's version. He asked for more missionaries to be sent, who would have the freedom to set off when they wanted and they were not to risk their lives when there was no guarantee of success. They would maintain the college in Havana on the condition that the monks who were sent there would be under no obligation to go to Florida.

<sup>28</sup> E. Ruidiaz Caravia, *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 228-238. Letter from Pedro Menéndez de Avilés to the King from Santa Elena, dated the 22nd of July 1571.

<sup>29</sup> A.C.R., leg. 2, n.º 5. Pedro Menéndez de Avilés' "Asiento" with King Philip II, section 16. Signed on the 20th of March 1565.

<sup>30</sup> M. Gannon, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

The lack of success in the religious terrain can be observed in the absence of any news for a long time. Only two letters which were received from the Father Sedeño and Brother Villarreal via Francisco de Borja<sup>31</sup> throw any light on the matter. From reading them, it is clear that the missionaries continued to have grave difficulties. The Indians even asked them to leave when they tried to help cure some of their sick, for they believed that the Adelantado did so much better. Meanwhile, the college in Havana, which had raised so many hopes, had only three students at that time. Father Sedeño, who had stayed for various months in Havana, returned to Florida together with the Adelantado and Brother Villarreal in the direction of Santa Elena. When they reached San Agustín, they came across a reinforcement ship with Brother Juan de la Carrera on board. The food problem at the forts having, for the time being, been solved with this new ship, they decided to return to Havana in the same ship in which they had arrived.

On the way, hurrican winds wrecked their ship which went down near Cape Cañaveral. They dug a trench, for they knew that as soon as the Indians heard of what had happened, they would arrive, and it would not be convenient to be found defenceless. In fact, when they did arrive, their vision of military preparations saw them agree to carry the remains of the shipwreck without taking any notice of them. After walking a little way, they came to a place where the Indians offered them water, food and even a canoe in which they were able to return to San Agustín. From there, in another ship which had just arrived from New Spain, they set off for Havana.

#### THE FINANCIAL PROBLEMS CONTINUE

The Adelantado repeatedly asked for help, emphasising his personal ruin; however he continued not to keep a note of his costs, or if he did, he did so in a general way, referring to his many losses, the great effort he had spent and the quantity of people he had had

<sup>31</sup> R. Vargas Ugarte, *op. cit.*, pp. 62-76. Letters sent from Santa Elena on the 8th of February 1572.



to support. The "Casa de Contratación" demanded that he quantify all that he mentioned, otherwise the real situation and the real needs of Florida would never be understood. For that reason, on the 26th of August 1572, a Royal Warrant was dispatched demanding an inventory from him of all that he had ever spent on the Armada from when he had taken over command<sup>32</sup>. They asked for justifications from his officials who, on the other hand believed that they were truly profitting from the Adelantado's expeditions which was only natural since he trusted in them so unequivocally because the majority belonged to his own family.

On the 12th of November 1572, the officials at the "Casa de Contratación" managed once again to put an embargo on the fleet's goods, obtaining a Royal grant from the King which obliged Menéndez to hand over all the money that had been paid for the Artillery of the Navy to the officials<sup>33</sup>. Because of this, it was feared that the Adelantado would be even less likely to recruit followers; he had already lost people who were not prepared to work without being paid. To solve this, on the 1st of December 1572, he was authorized to replenish the ranks of the Armada with people from Asturias.

Though everyone in Spain was doing their utmost to control Menéndez, he continued to rely on the full trust of the Crown as he had done for so many years. The Royal Warrant of the 23rd of February 1573 was proof of this. By way of a new "Capitulación", it authorized the Adelantado to conquer and to populate all that remained of Florida, up to the river Panuco<sup>34</sup>, lands of which he then became Governor and Adelantado, with the same rights as those stipulated in 1565. At the same time (on the 3rd of March), he was given licence to take Asturian families to Florida, and was provided with special assistance for the Havana fortress, which was to come from the Viceroy and the Captain General of New Spain, Don Martín Enríquez, which consisted of four thousand ducados<sup>35</sup>. The officials of Panama, who paid Menéndez and his officials the amount that they owed them for the consignment of the ships and the crew which they

<sup>32</sup> A.C.R., leg. 2, n.º 38.

<sup>33</sup> A.C.R., leg. 2, n.º 39.

<sup>34</sup> A.C.R., leg. 2, n.º 31.

<sup>35</sup> A.C.R., leg. 2, n.º 41.



had taken, would send twelve thousand ducats for artillery<sup>36</sup>. When they received that, they would inform them what it all amounted to, for in the event of a surplus, they could always use it for artillery for the forts. If, in spite of all the assistance, some deserted, the authorities would get together to look for them and capture them<sup>37</sup>.

On the 10th of November 1573, all the officials of 'Tierra Firme' were told that they were obliged to give thirty maravedis from their own salary towards Menéndez's Armada. He would also receive what they would have paid for the rights of the journey until then, though they were to be exempt from paying this sum in the future<sup>38</sup>.

Philip II supported Pedro Menéndez, whether he was a good administrator or not. He knew at least that he was relying on an unbreakable loyalty in him and therefore he asked for what he thought necessary. He charged him with highly responsible undertakings and it is possible that at that time, he could not find anyone who seemed to him competent enough to take them on; for that reason, the monarch preferred not to inquire too far about the costs that he mounted up. For all these years, the King had shared a dream with Menéndez, for which he had to confront the highest institutions of the State, he had taken decisions against them all and had shown that Florida was, for him, one of the main spires of his empire.

#### FINAL RETURN TO SPAIN. PEDRO MENÉNDEZ'S FIRST WILL

At this time, another part of his vast dominion was a cause of serious concern to Philip II. This was Flanders. The experience of the last few years had demonstrated that he would have to act carefully and extremely quick-wittedly. These, of course, were qualities that Pedro Menéndez was well able to provide, and he sent for him immediately. Before leaving, Domingo Gomara had set down to the accounts which related to all the time that Menéndez had been Governor of Havana, but the urgency of the voyage did not allow him to finish them. Diego

<sup>36</sup> A.C.R., leg. 2, n.º 33.

<sup>37</sup> A.C.R., leg. 2, n.º 36.

<sup>38</sup> A.C.R., leg. 2, n.º 40.

Flores de Valdés received the order to give him six thousand ducats beforehand for what they would pay for his services, but even this money did not arrive on time; he was told that he would have to leave it all and begin the return as soon as he could.

On reaching Spain, he saw that Philip II had pinned all his hopes on him, but Menéndez felt ill and tired after the intensive years in the Indies. He had a feeling that he would not be returning there, so he made his will on the 7th of January 1574 in Sanlúcar<sup>39</sup>. In it, he made Pedro del Castillo, his great ally in economic matters in Florida, his executor, with powers to be paid what the King owed and to put the small amount that was left in order. His debts would be paid as his services were paid for. He was also given a title and an estate; his eldest daughter Doña Catalina would inherit it first, and if she were to have no descendents, his nephew Pedro Menéndez de Avilés (son of his brother Alvar and Doña Berenguela de Valdés). If he were to have none either, it would fall to Doña María Menéndez, his other daughter, who was married to Diego Velasco.

Doña Catalina would come to possess the 'Asiento' of Florida, and Doña María would receive the title of Marchioness<sup>40</sup> which he had been given in 1565. The 'Asiento' for Panuco would fall to his nephew Pedro Menéndez de Avilés. He had devoted many years to Florida and as he saw that he would perhaps never return there, he wanted to make his descendents do so. He thus specified that if they wanted to use these titles they would have actually to live in Florida, "[...] because my real desire is that Florida is forever peopled, so that the Holy Gospel is spread and properly implanted in those provinces". His wife was still there as well, and she was to inherit all his worldly goods.

<sup>39</sup> A.C.R., leg. 9, n.º 21 and leg. 47, n.º 7.

<sup>40</sup> Even though this title was promised to Pedro Menéndez in the 'Asiento' (section n.º 20) by the King, the family was not to receive it until 1675, after a long series of petitions to the Crown. The first to receive it was Don Gabriel Menéndez de Avilés, Vith Adelantado of Florida, with the name of Count of Canalejas. See in the appendix for the Menéndez family tree.

## XII

### THE GREAT ARMADA. THE DEATH OF PEDRO MENÉNDEZ DE AVILÉS

#### CRISIS IN THE GREAT EMPIRE

The Spanish monarch had now spent many years waging his «Holy War» in a world that was bent beneath the iron hand of his authoritarian regime; in some countries his rule was increasingly disputed. From the beginning of his reign, political and religious protests, led by William of Orange and other nobles, arose in the Low Countries. But their requests were continuously rejected by Philip II. The King's delayed response, an excuse which was also employed when he could find no way of answering French accusations concerning Menéndez's behaviour in Florida, became a peculiar way of handling matters when he had decided not to attend to something asked of him. He tried to win time, obstinately believing that events tend to unfold of their own accord. Sooner or later, those who sought his attention would tire and the matter would stay as it was, which was precisely what he was after.

When he saw that he would inevitably have to provide an answer to the request for the decentralising of the Low Countries, he wrote his famous «Letters from Segovia woods» on the 20th of October 1565, in which he merely ratified the policies he had been following until then, without making any real changes. This decision gave the Regent, his sister Margarita de Parma<sup>1</sup>, a serious problem. She had to face

<sup>1</sup> William of Orange began as one of Charles' V's loyal servants, but something about him cannot have pleased Philip II, and he was not accepted as Governor of Flanders. Instead, Philip made his sister, Margarita of Parma, Regent.

permanent social unrest, which was uncontrollable in spite of the various concessions she had been obliged to make. The revolts spread, so much so that even Philip's son Don Carlos came to be implicated in these events; he was supposed to have been supporting the rebels. It was never known whether this was actually the case, but the King refused to doubt it and he shut him away and he died in 1568. Meanwhile he put the whole issue of Flanders into the hands of the Duke of Alba. But the latter's hawkish policies did not help to make the situation any easier.

The whole of Europe hung on the events in the Low Countries. The outcome could entail the beginning of the end of the Spanish empire. The general European interest in these events was not limited to passive observing. Elizabeth I of England gave unconditional support to the uprising. Philip II considered her a heretic and had therefore caused her many political difficulties by continually supporting the attempts to put Mary Stuart<sup>2</sup> on the throne. France, where the events in Florida had not been forgotten, was under pressure from the Huguenots. The Crown therefore chose to help the rebels. With the backing of these two countries, William of Orange went into battle against the Duke of Alba in 1568. Once the latter had defeated the enemy ranks, he had no scruples about repressing them severely; William of Orange thus fled into exile in Germany, where he continued working for his cause, and he made sure that he kept in touch with Coligny and the English protestants.

In 1572, a further revolt erupted. This time the rising took place in the main cities, and it might have been a victory for the Prince of Orange had it not been for some problems with the allies. France had supported the revolt unconditionally from the beginning, but there was soon a reaction from the Catholics. In a bloody encounter with the Protestants known as the «St. Bartholomew's day Massacre» (on the 24th August 1572), Coligny, among others, was murdered, and the immediate withdrawal of any French troops in the conflict in the Netherlands was immediately demanded, for it was believed that this was basically a religious matter. Left without this vital support, Orange was forced to flee once again.

<sup>2</sup> Catholic Queen of Scotland.

The Spanish King now had no funds for any further wars. He was overcome by the debts that he had contracted. The revolutionary reality suggested by these movements persuaded him to try to soften his policies. For this reason, in 1573, he replaced the Duke of Alba with Don Luis de Requesens who was of a more moderate disposition. But this time he had waited too long for a solution. When the new Governor granted an amnesty, or a «general pardon», which no-one had actually called for, it was already late and the general uprising had begun. Perhaps remembering his victory at St. Quentin, Philip decided to stifle this movement with force. He therefore dispatched a great Armada which he hoped would recover his territories, authority and prestige that had so plummeted in the Low Countries at this time.

The situation required urgent, accurate measures and Philip chose to resort to his most reliable lieutenant on the seas. On the 10th of February 1574, the monarch gave Pedro Menéndez the task of organizing a great Armada on land and sea, which was being prepared in Santander, of which he would assume command as Captain General. Besides putting an end to the pirates who were roaming these western coasts, it would go to aid Requesens up by the Flanders canal, in order to recover the ports that were occupied by the rebels.

The importance that the Crown attached to this mission, that was now in the Adelantado's hands was evident in the many powers that it conferred on him and that were specified in the Royal "Título"<sup>3</sup> written in Aranjuez on the 10th of February 1574. They were expanded and ratified in a series of subsequent Royal Warrants and letters which Philip II had sent during the whole year to Pedro Menéndez de Avilés. The correspondence between them during these months was copious, often written on a daily basis, and it showed how scrupulously they were preparing for the occasion.

Menéndez was supplied with all the artillery and men that he needed. They even kept a check on certain goods if they happened to be thought necessary for the country. On such an occasion, they would send the appropriate instructions to the different authorities. The four villas of the Señorío of Vizcaya, the province of Guipúzcoa, the Principality of Asturias, the provinces of León, Burgos, and the

<sup>3</sup> A.C.R., leg. 2, n.º 3.

Adelantamiento of Castilla <sup>4</sup>, Andalucía and even Portugal <sup>5</sup> all assisted in the organization of the Navy, which was the largest of the many that had ever been assembled.

From the beginning there was a desperate struggle against time to find men, money, ships and artillery. It took a painfully long time to arrange for all that was necessary to arrive from all these disparate places. Meanwhile, the news from Flanders was alarming. A small amount of aid was sent to contain the pressure of the rebels, while they waited for reinforcements for the main assault <sup>6</sup>.

Of course, all this activity did not pass unnoticed by the other powers, above all by the expectant Elizabeth I of England who, for all the assistance she had given the rebels was bound to suffer most were this Armada to be victorious. The Queen needed to know not only about the preparations, but also about when it planned to set out. For this reason, she sent some pirate ships to Galicia and Vizcaya, and from Lisbon to Flanders. The King, however, immediately warned Menéndez about their presence <sup>7</sup>.

Different problems plagued Menéndez: the impossibly slow arrival of all that was necessary, the lack of money sent by the Crown in spite of the repeated promises to the contrary, and finally the reluctance of the men to go to war. The Adelantado had serious difficulties recruiting them though he made enormous efforts, as can be seen from one of the paragraphs of his letters to the King:

[...] the sailors here [in Bilbao] are robust people, accustomed to the cold as in Flanders, so I will try to get as many as I can here [...] And if I cannot, I will go to Oviedo to look for people, because even though they are from the mountain and not from the sea. I will teach them how to row so that we can leave as soon as possible [...] <sup>8</sup>.

In spite of his fatigue, he lacked no dedication or interest in all the missions which he was entrusted with.

<sup>4</sup> A.C.R., leg. 2, n.º 5 and 6.

<sup>5</sup> A.C.R., leg. 2, n.º 29.

<sup>6</sup> A.C.R., leg. 2, n.º 10.

<sup>7</sup> A.C.R., leg. 2, n.º 23.

<sup>8</sup> E. Ruidíaz Caravia, *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 238-277 y pp. 250-256. Letters from Pedro Menéndez de Avilés to the King from Bilbao, dated the 4th and 15th of March 1574.



The Crown tried to help by providing Court officials as Captains<sup>9</sup>, while it alerted all the civil servants to persuade people not to flee from the sea. On the 7th of April 1574, Don Juan de Borja, the Spanish ambassador to Portugal was told of the arrival of some ships that had come from Vizcaya and Guipúzcoa and were going to fish in Terranova. He then detained them in the name of the Spanish King to see if they were necessary for the Armada bound for Flanders<sup>10</sup>.

The King went to all ends and urged that the fleet should set out by not later than May of that year (1574), for he was alarmed by the calls for help which were always arriving from Flanders. From April, ships from Portugal and Andalucía bound for Santander began to set out. Wood was sent from the four towns and munition from Málaga. Menéndez was also told that the foot infantry would come from the Kingdoms of Toledo, Segovia, Ávila and Zamora and that they would be joining the greatest of all secrets, just as soon as they could organize themselves so that the fleet should not delay on its own behalf<sup>11</sup>. The Adelantado was even ordered to take people from the doors of their houses if he needed to recruit more men; and if he could not find enough officials, it was authorized that the Captains of one ship could serve for several<sup>12</sup>. In addition, some were brought from Flanders seeing as they had had such a formative experience on those coasts.

As can be seen, the main problem lay in the difficulty of recruiting men. In general they were people of the sea, who could very well earn their living from fishing. They simply did not want to get involved in a war of which many must have had bitter experiences, and they also knew that on this occasion the operation was highly dangerous, because the whole region was up in arms. For this reason, in spite of the Royal Warrant of the 12th of February<sup>13</sup>, where it was indicated that seamen and officials would receive the same salary as in other Armadas, latterly Menéndez was allowed to raise the salary high

<sup>9</sup> A.C.R., leg. 2, A, 11, n.º 19.

<sup>10</sup> A.C.R., leg. 2, A, 11, n.º 21.

<sup>11</sup> A.C.R., leg. 2, n.º 11.

<sup>12</sup> A.C.R., leg. 2, n.º 13.

<sup>13</sup> A.C.R., leg. 2, A, 11, n.º 24.



enough to give them more incentive to join up. He was even given permission to recruit Portuguese, if it came to that <sup>14</sup>.

The problems and the urgency with which it was necessary to act did not let Philip forget the religious aspect. For the monarch's political activity was also religious. They had to recover the lost territories and the souls of the people living there. The bishop of Calahorra was charged with sending at least twelve clerics to the Armada. On this occasion, as in Florida, Menéndez opted for Jesuits, and he let the King know this, alleging that the priests who would be accompanying them had to be extremely learned in order to face the heretics and to teach the sailors who would be going to hear some pretty serious slanders against their religion. The King took heed of his wishes and sent six members of the Company of Jesus apart from the clerics.

Among the troops who were already in Santander, the majority had been recruited by force and discontent was setting in because of the time they had spent doing absolutely nothing. The combination of lazing around and the fact that there were so many different kinds of people meant that fierce arguments soon broke out in the ranks. One of them even ended in a murder, as in the case of Don García Vargas, who was apparently murdered at the hands of Don Rodrigo Vargas and his soldiers. His detention, and an interminable series of reports, held up other matters in the fleet, to the great displeasure of the monarch. He gave Menéndez instructions to carry Vargas with him, in the conditions that he was in, even if they had to bail him out, if the judges so wished <sup>15</sup>. At that time, Flanders was much more important than any other issue.

The urgency for leaving was all well and good, but still they did not leave. The money that the King had promised continued not to arrive, or it did so too slowly, and the troops, quite apart from arguing, got ill because of the poor, over-crowded conditions that they were living in. And it got to September 1574, and the great Armada, of 150 ships, almost 30,000 soldiers, together with artillery and food for six months, had still not left Spanish shores.

On the 7th of September, when everyone was finally ready to leave, Menéndez, in spite of all the responsibilities that he must have

<sup>14</sup> A.C.R., leg. 2, n.º 15.

<sup>15</sup> A.C.R., leg. 2, A, 11, n.º 53.

had to keep a check on, devoted his last hours in Spain to writing to his nephew, Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, who had remained in Florida as Governor there. It is as if he had known that his last hour was close. In a long letter, he told him of all that had been happening in the preparation of the great Armada. His faith, his loyalty to the King and his exhaustion are obvious:

[...] the works over here are insupportable, and there is no real prize, given that the main thing is to go in the service of God and the King against these Lutheran heretics by helping Our Holy Catholic Faith to grow [...] <sup>16</sup>.

He wanted his wife to wait for him in Florida where he longed to return one day, as he conveyed to his nephew:

[...] and after the salvation of my soul, there is nothing in this world I desire more than to see myself in Florida, to end my days saving souls. His Majesty has noticed how unhappy I look away from Florida, and he has had the grace to tell me that whenever he is able, he will allow me to go, and I pray that this will be in the spring [...].

#### THE DEATH OF THE "ADELANTADO"

On the following day, he was entrusted with the highest command and the Royal Standard as Captain General of the Armada which they called «The Invincible»; it was to set off in the next few days. They had toiled and invested so much, but Philip so trusted in Menéndez's ability to bring about a victory that he considered his efforts well spent. But on this occasion, destiny was stronger than the Adelantado's courage. That same day, he fell gravely ill from typhoid fever <sup>17</sup>, by which he recognized that his death was approaching.

They tried all they could to contain the fever. They even brought him different potions which sometimes had astonishing results. On this

<sup>16</sup> A.C.R.; M. Vigil, *op. cit.*, pp. 179-183; E. Ruidíaz Caravia, *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 288-292.

<sup>17</sup> A highly serious, mortal fever.

occasion, however, they were lamentably inefficient. Seeing this, on the 15th of September, Menéndez dictated a codicil<sup>18</sup> to his will that he had written that year<sup>19</sup>. In this he confirmed that his daughter Catalina was to be his heir, and he added his desire that his mortal remains rest in the church of San Nicolás de Avilés where his ancestors had been buried. He also asked for a series of masses and orations to be sung in his name, and then claimed financial compensation from the King for all the years that he had spent in the Crown's service—some thirty two—so that the debts that had mounted up in the Florida business could be paid.

Two days afterwards (on the 17th of September 1574), at the age of fifty-five, Florida's Adelantado breathed his last, far away from the places that he had loved and given so much to. His family were waiting for him there, and he would have returned had death, the allusive enemy, not forestalled him. This death must have been a severe blow for Philip, personally as well as politically speaking. It was clear to all how much the King admired and trusted the Adelantado. He had shown it from the very start of his life as a sailor when he had hired him to accompany his ship to his wedding. He asked for his services whenever he required valuable cargo that had to come from the Indies. When Florida rose from being just one conquered territory to the crux of the conflict with other powers that were also trying to lay down roots there, Philip gave him his full backing, sometimes intervening on his behalf against the "Casa de Contratación". On one occasion, he even bailed him out of prison; and when he was accused of embezzling royal funds which had been sent to Florida, the King responded by granting him new powers which helped him in the conquest of Panuco.

Nor did Philip ever think of changing his attitude; he even issued laws in person if Menéndez had some particular request. One only need remember the permission that he managed to obtain to take Jesuit monks to Florida, at a time when only mendicant orders were allowed to travel to the new continent. The honour of being presented with the rank of Captain General of the Indies fleet, without the "Casa

<sup>18</sup> Codicil granted in Santander by Pedro Menéndez de Avilés on the 15th of September 1574; A.C.R., leg. 9, n.º 21; see appendix V at the end of this book.

<sup>19</sup> Pedro Menéndez de Avilés' will, made in Sanlúcar de Barrameda on the 7th of January 1574; A.C.R., leg. 9, n.º 21; see appendix IV at the end of this book.

de Contratación" the institution in charge of such appointments even being consulted, also shows how favoured he was. However it was precisely this admiration and support which brought so many problems in their wake, because of the resentment which such unreserved royal attitude awoke in so many officials.

Finally, when the monarch saw that his European empire was seriously in danger, his thoughts turned to Menéndez once again. He gave him supreme power to take on the most difficult, important task of his life. The King must have been devastated by this death, which also had great historical significance however impossible it is to speculate on such a matter.

In Florida, Menéndez's disappearance soon began to be felt. He had no family fortune, and his heirs proved to be fairly uninterested in continuing the work that the Adelantado had begun. Some, including Esteban de las Alas whom Menéndez had so trusted, had already left Florida because he thought that it seemed senseless to continue. It was also clear that none of his relations or officials possessed Menéndez's particular qualities. The Crown therefore began to question the convenience of staying on in Florida. Only its strategic interest, wherein it afforded protection to the fleets on their return to the peninsula, tipped the balance in favour of keeping it on. Menéndez's successors had, of course, rather different treatment to that which their illustrious predecessor had enjoyed up to his death. From that moment onwards, Florida would be managed directly by the Crown and its officials. Urgent matters would be resolved by the Viceroy of Mexico while all the positions that the Adelantado had occupied would turn back to rely on official organizations.

Following Pedro Menéndez's last wishes, his body, wrapped in the shroud of Santiago, was loaded onto a ship to be buried in Avilés, but the sea that he knew so well temporarily changed these plans. On the way to Llanes, a great storm blew up which obliged them to leave it where it was in the church of Santa María. The remains were not in fact moved to Avilés<sup>20</sup> until 1591, where they arrived on the 9th of November, with Don Gonzalo Solís. They were exposed for the whole night in the family house and then placed in St. Nicholas' church.

<sup>20</sup> A.C.R.; M. Vigil, *op. cit.*, pp. 196-198; E. Ruidíaz Caravia, *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 530-531.

There the coffin remained with three crosses to the order of Santiago along with other coats of arms pertaining to the house of Valdés as well as Menéndez's own insignia.

Here Menéndez's body remained for seventy-one years, but it seemed as if the body of this man, who had struggled so intensely in life, could not settle even in death, and again it had to be moved. From May 1652, works in the church of St. Nicolás were begun which meant that the bones had to be moved, for the two years that they lasted. On this occasion, his grandson, Gabriel Menéndez de Avilés, asked for a stone sepulchre to be constructed. The coffin stayed there until 1924<sup>21</sup>. In homage to his house in Avilés and to Florida, a further sepulchre was sculpted by Gonzalo de Avilés. A large number of representatives from the state of Florida and the city of San Agustín were present at these proceedings which recognized Menéndez's achievements. On the 9th of August, after several days commemoration, the Adelantado's remains were moved to the temple of San Nicolás where they were installed with the following inscription:

HERE LIES BURIED THE ILLUSTRIOUS PEDRO MENÉNDEZ DE AVILÉS, BORN IN THIS HOUSE, ADELANTADO OF FLORIDA, "COMENDADOR DE LA ZARZA", OF THE ORDER OF SANTIAGO AND CAPTAIN GENERAL OF THE SEA, THE OCEAN AND THE CATHOLIC ARMADA WHICH KING PHILIP II ASSEMBLED IN SANTANDER AGAINST ENGLAND IN 1574, WHERE HE DIED ON THE 17th OF SEPTEMBER OF THAT YEAR AT THE AGE OF 55<sup>22</sup>.

In July 1936, at the beginning of the Spanish Civil War, his remains were taken to the civil cemetery at Carriona, where they were guarded in at least three different places. In 1938, they were taken to the church of San Francisco where they were also moved about, because of the different works that went on there. On the 18th of August 1956, they were taken to the parish church of San Nicolás,

<sup>21</sup> J. Menéndez, *Elogio Fúnebre de Pedro Menéndez de Avilés*, pronounced in Avilés on the 9th of August 1924. Unpublished historical documents.

<sup>22</sup> J. Menéndez, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

which meant that Menéndez's will was finally fulfilled, three hundred and eighty two years after his death <sup>23</sup>.

## HEIRS

If it seemed that no relation wanted to stay in Florida, in actual fact they all self-righteously defended their rights to the succession, which involved no capital, but plenty of titles, nobility and prestige. In fact, many go so far as to argue that the family, and Menéndez himself, were only really concerned about rising socially. It is true to say that he did not come from a noble family and, as Schwaller shows <sup>24</sup>, he was not even addressed as «Don» until the Crown granted him the honour as part of the Order of Santiago <sup>25</sup>. It is possible then, that he may have sought some means of rising socially, a desire that he would doubtless have been unable to achieve had he stayed in Spain. Nevertheless, there must have been something more than high office motivating him in Florida. He already enjoyed both the unconditional support of the Crown and the title of Adelantado from 1565. In 1568, when the three years that the «Capitulación» had specified were up, he would not have needed to continue struggling to widen the Spanish hold in the northern half of the continent, nor to fight to guarantee his family's position there had he been only out for himself.

Pedro Menéndez had five children, one of whom was illegitimate. He had a single son, by his wife Doña María de Solís, who was called Juan and who disappeared on the Caribbean in 1563, as well as Doña Ana and Doña María. His illegitimate daughter was also called María. Juan died before his father got to Florida and María entered a convent (in 1554) after having renounced all her rights to any property <sup>26</sup>.

<sup>23</sup> J. Ureña y Hevia, *Aproximación al conocimiento y personalidad de Pedro Menéndez de Avilés*, unpublished.

<sup>24</sup> J.F. Schwaller, «Nobility, Family and service: Menéndez and his Men», in *Florida Historical Quarterly*, June 1988, p. 299.

<sup>25</sup> National Historical Archive, Military Orders, expediente 5.212.

<sup>26</sup> E. Lyon, *Aspects of Pedro Menéndez, the Man*, El Escribano, p. 49.



The Adelantado did not wait to write his first will to decide how he would be succeeded in Florida. When he lost Juan, he decided that his daughter Catalina should inherit the "Adelantamiento" and "Mayorazgo". However, Catalina was disinherited by her father for marrying Hernando de Miranda without his consent<sup>27</sup>. His thoughts then turned to his other daughter Ana, who was married to Pedro de Valdés<sup>28</sup>, who came from one of the most influential families in Asturias, and who was one of the most unconventional people around. Pedro de Valdés left for Florida, where he accompanied his father-in-law on many occasions, while his wife, Doña Ana stayed all that time in Asturias, and died in 1571 when she was murdered by her own father-in-law, Juan de Valdés's debtors<sup>29</sup>. When Doña Ana died without leaving any children, the "Mayorazgo" of Florida that had been left to her line of descent lay vacant.

With Doña Catalina disinherited and Doña Ana deceased, they had then to think of the illegitimate daughter, María, who had married Diego de Velasco, a grandson of the "Condestable" of Castilla, and who was also an illegitimate son, which explains that how such an old family and one of such fine stock came to tie in with the Menéndezs. Velasco and Doña María left for Florida in 1571, with the Adelantado's wife, Doña María de Solís and all the members of her house, so as to set themselves up in Florida forever.

Velasco became Lieutenant and interim Governor of Florida for five years (1571-1576). He soon had problems with all sectors, even the monks, for they censured his bad treatment of the Indians. This was brought to Pedro Menéndez's attention, and after a reconciliation with his daughter Catalina, returned her and her husband, (Hernando de Miranda) the "Adelantamiento" and the "Mayorazgo" that had been created for him in 1568. María was to inherit the title of Marqués as well as the lands of Florida which were her father's particular property, and which measured some twenty-five square leagues both had been gained through the "Asiento"<sup>30</sup>.

<sup>27</sup> A.C.R., CAN 13, n.º 21, and CAN 12, n.º 21.

<sup>28</sup> A.C.R.; Valdés, leg. 14, n.º 1. The "Capitulaciones" in the name of the couple Doña Ana Menéndez and Don Pedro de Valdés were signed on the 24th of March 1565.

<sup>29</sup> A.C.R.; Valdés, leg. 10, n.º 1.

<sup>30</sup> A.C.R.; Valdés, leg. 2, n.º 21 will. Both concessions can be found in the



Immediately after Menéndez's death (on the 17th of September 1574), Catalina and Hernando de Miranda claimed the titles of Governor, Captain General and Adelantado all for themselves. Once they had obtained them, they set off for Florida, where her relation, Diego Velasco was acting as Governor. When it came to the point, the latter was not, logically enough, disposed to give up the position which he had come to consider his own, and an argument broke out between them. Hernando de Miranda even asked Doña María de Solís, the Adelantado's widow for an inventory of what her husband had left her on his death, in order to make out whether Velasco had appropriated anything unduly. This indeed turned out to be the case. Miranda called for Velasco to be taken to prison<sup>31</sup>, in order to get him out of his way and eliminate a clear competitor for the post of Adelantado.

Hernando de Miranda's had no real affection or interest in Florida. He was really only interested in hording all that he could for his own ends. His Governorship could not have been worse and he ended up with a large amount of what his father-in-law had created. His management was negative in all respects, particularly his attitude towards the Indians, whom he never respected and whom he trampled over at any excuse. This behaviour soon excited the Indians' hatred. His soldiers even mutinied against him, for they were intensely annoyed at not receiving their salaries which should have reached them from New Spain. They also made him responsible for the attacks to which they were subject from the Indians as soon as they left the fort.

As soon as he saw that his authority was in dispute, he became more rigid, which made matters even more difficult. The situation came to a head when the fort at Santa Elena was destroyed by the Indians. The soldiers took advantage of this situation and left once and for all in (1576). Even Hernando de Miranda left. Morale dropped dramatically as a result: Santa Elena had symbolized both Pedro Menéndez's great victory over the French and, more importantly, the confirmation of Spanish hegemony in Florida. The fort had once been the French objective; it was now the place that the Indians chose to demonstrate that things were changing in Florida after the Adelantado's death.

"Asiento" signed by Pedro Menéndez de Avilés and Philip II on the 20th of March 1565, section 20.

<sup>31</sup> E. Lyon, *Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, The Man*, El Escribano, p. 21.

Meanwhile, the Council of the Indies back in Spain alerted the King to the need to arrange matters properly, before the heirs could share out the spoils. None of them seemed entirely trustworthy for running affairs. In August 1575 ordered an embargo to be placed on all the Adelantado's goods, until Baltasar del Castillo and Ahedo, who had been nominated by the monarch, returned to Florida with a report on the state of things<sup>32</sup>.

As a result of Castillo's visit to Florida, from where he returned to Cuba on the 26th of December 1576, they detected anomalies which showed how royal money had been used for private purposes. Velasco was detained and Hernando de Miranda denounced for having left his position as Governor in Santa Elena, which had allowed the Indians to seize the fort<sup>33</sup>. On the 22nd of March 1577, Pedro Menéndez Márquez was made Governor, replacing Velasco who had already lost the title of Adelantado. Many new officials were also appointed, and most of the family belongings confiscated. Velasco was exiled for a period of five years, though in 1579, he was freed of his duties and went to Mexico. It was clear that the Crown's attitude had changed. Things were not actually working from an economic point of view; it was worse than in the days of the Adelantado, and none of his relations convinced the King that they could carry out his plans in Florida. Philip II was not prepared to make concessions for any doubtful behaviour, as he had done with Menéndez de Avilés.

From then on, the Adelantado's heirs embarked on a long series of measures in which they beseeched the Crown to return the title that had been granted in perpetuity<sup>34</sup> in the original "Asiento". These efforts did not bear fruit until 1633 when the family were finally awarded the precious title<sup>35</sup>.

Pedro Menéndez Márquez was also unable to see the wisdom in maintaining the policy of good relations with the Indians. He showed himself to be cruel, all-powerful and provocative, which only incited

<sup>32</sup> E. Lyon, «La visita de 1576 y la transformación del Gobierno en La Florida española», in *La influencia en el Caribe, La Florida y La Luisiana, 1500-1800*, Speeches at the meeting of La Rábida between the 7th to the 12th of September 1981, p. 201.

<sup>33</sup> E. Lyon, *Ibidem*, p. 206.

<sup>34</sup> Pedro Menéndez's "Asiento", paragraph 17.

<sup>35</sup> A.C.R.; CAN 50, n.º 3. Today the title is enjoyed by Alvaro María Armada y Ulloa, the Count of Revillagigedo, Marquis of San Esteban del Mar.

hostility; this had, of course, also happened on Pedro Menéndez de Avilés' expeditions. Meanwhile, the accounts had still not been straightened out; they stayed as they had been since San Agustín was first founded.

No doubt, Menéndez de Avilés had not managed his dream of achieving Spanish hegemony «at all costs» terribly competently. His companions lacked idealism for the project, and profitted by it. Florida posed many a sacrifice to its explorers, and it was never a place for those who were simply after getting rich quick. In Menéndez's absence, no-one knew, nor cared, how to proceed. When Lyon addressed his thoughts to the future after the Governor's death, he said:

Menéndez's vision never materialized. Though Florida survived the crisis of 1576, the Spaniards did not expand into North America an objective Menéndez had laboured for so furiously. By the 1570s, the decisive decade, the funds and the energy necessary for defending the settlements were too often put to only very specific ends<sup>36</sup>.

It is often remarked that Menéndez's sudden death meant that he never saw how his life's work was destroyed largely by the attitude of his own family, the family that he had gone to such lengths to try to install comfortably in Florida. It is impossible to speculate about what might have happened in Florida had the Adelantado, who had been taken away from his land because of other obligations, lived a little longer. All the same, if he had had to witness how events did actually unfold, his death was no doubt a blessing. Florida continued to be Spanish for almost two centuries, but Menéndez's dream was never to come true.

<sup>36</sup> E. Lyon, *Ibidem*, p. 209.



## CONCLUSION

As we have seen, Florida resisted conquest like no other place in the New World, even though the Spanish Crown employed more men and more resources to this effect. While the great Aztec empire had succumbed to the Spanish sword fairly quickly, fifty-two years of failed attempts were necessary before the Spaniards were able to guarantee a proper, continuous hold on the territory. Only Philip's obstinacy, Florida's strategic value and Menéndez's exceptional qualities meant that they never quite relinquished the idea of establishing themselves in this Northern segment of the American continent.

Menéndez was never able to conquer Florida properly, let alone to colonize her. Any attempt to analyse the reasons for such a result involves examining many a chapter of calamity and failure. At least six expeditions had gone to Florida and most of them were led by highly experienced men who had formerly been successful in other areas of the New World.

Unfortunately for the conquistadors, there were no precious metals there, though at the beginning they thought they would find some because they found small pieces of gold and silver in the possession of the Indians. This gave the expeditionaries false hope; after furiously looking for treasure, they had to return empty-handed.

I ought to emphasise that they had not merely unwittingly omitted to find any mines of gold and silver; it was simply that there were none. So how does one explain the way in which the Crown was persistently inundated by requests to go out to Florida as Adelantado? The reality was that the few survivors of the various expeditions who returned from Florida, in an effort to conceal their failure perhaps,

would talk only of the riches that could be found there. This naturally encouraged people to try again, and the kings to provide for further expeditions. Once there, they would walk and walk and search unceasingly. They set up no towns nor any permanent holdings, and they did not live with the Indians. In fact they failed basically because they could not find what they had dreamt of finding. Dávila Padilla does not seem to regret this, writing:

God arranged it so that what had begun badly, would end badly, and as the efforts of those people was basically to lay their hands on riches, for which they committed certain atrocities, in Florida their lives met an untimely end...

In fact, a tragic number of Spanish lives were lost in Florida, including those of all the Adelantados, together with considerable economic losses.

However, in spite of Dávila's claims, one ought to emphasise that Florida itself also contributed to these negative results. First, one should point out the nomadic, or semi-nomadic, nature of the Indians who had developed no sustained agricultural system. The Spaniards were therefore unable to stay in one place for very long. Once they had sown the land, the Indians would go off in search of meat and fish in order to survive, while they waited for the crops to grow. They often left for distant places, taking their families with them, and would stay there for several months a year.

For that reason, there were no real population nuclei which would have facilitated a more rapid conquest, for the expeditionary party would have set up new centres adjacent to those already established. In this way, in the eyes of the Indians, the Spaniards seemed simply to be passing through, plundering their food and chattels at the same time. There was thus a rather strained relationship between both groups, which meant that the conquest was practically an impossible achievement. In other areas of the New World, the taking of the Indian capital, or the capturing of the Indian leader meant that the whole tribe tended to give themselves up. In Florida, they had to overcome an Indian element that was perfectly in tune with the surrounding environment. The Spaniards, by contrast, were a much

smaller number, and they had to face a climate and a geography that was entirely new for them.

To these factors, one would have to add the Indian aggression which was fairly consistent. It began as soon as the Indians saw how their visitors, who had been so splendid at first, showed themselves to be looters. Conflict was always inevitable. The fewer numbers of Spaniards made the superiority of the Indians even greater.

All these obstacles would no doubt have been manageable had they found gold and silver there; since this was not the case, their experience in Florida involved revolts, desertions and other irresponsible behaviour from men who were simply not prepared to put up with so many hardships that only went to serve the prestige of the country and the King. They did not even find the Anián pass for which they always had their eye out, ever since they first heard it mentioned in 1520. They found no riches, survival was problematic, the climate almost always inclement, the Indians hostile... It is unlikely that Florida would ever have been Spanish had it not been for Pedro Menéndez's great ingenuity.

It should be said that the Spaniards made a fine, heroic effort. The results, the foundation of San Agustín and the construction of several forts (Santa Elena, San Felipe and San Mateo) might seem unprepossessing, but they did have an important historical significance.

The power of the Spanish Crown, which had been challenged by several European powers, was consolidated and reaffirmed in the xvth century. The period was also an important historical moment for what would later become the present United States of America.

In the xvth and xviii centuries, different transformations, the result of various international developments, were to mark Florida's destiny until it was finally separated from Spain. By the time this happened, a profoundly Spanish character had already taken root. Today, the legacy of this lengthy Spanish presence on the North American continent, can be observed and «felt» in many of the States that these xvth century conquistadors had wandered through. Texas, Florida, California, Mississippi etc. have preserved names such as San Diego, San Antonio or San Francisco and they maintain traditions that have been absorbed from the large number of Hispanics who live there.



In this book, I have not tried to commemorate the era of the great Spanish empire nor to lament its loss. My purpose has been to vindicate, to analyse and to understand the origins of a great people, whom we hope will be known a little better after this book has been read.

In the year 1891, I was the first to demonstrate the fact that the human mind is not a blank slate, but that it is filled with ideas and feelings which are inherited from our ancestors. This was a revolutionary idea at the time, and it has since been accepted by all who study the human mind.

## APPENDICES

1. The first appendix is a list of the names of the people who were present at the meeting of the University of Chicago on the 15th of January, 1891. The names are listed in alphabetical order, and each name is followed by a number indicating the page on which the name is mentioned. This list is intended to give a complete record of the people who were present at the meeting, and it is hoped that it will be found useful to all who are interested in the history of the University of Chicago.

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# I

## CAPITULACION GRANTED TO PEDRO MENÉNDEZ DE AVILÉS FOR THE DISCOVERY AND THE COLONIZATION OF THE PROVINCES OF FLORIDA. 15TH OF MARCH 1565

### EL REY

Por quanto en dibersos tienpos hemos tomado asientos sobre el descubrimiento y población de las provincias de la Florida y tambien encargamos a Don Luys de Velasco, nuestro Bisorrey que fué de la Nueva España, que enbiase alguna cantidad de gente y rreliгиозos a poblar aquella tierra y postreramente se tomó asiento sobre ello con Lucas Vazquez de Ayllon, y así, por las personas con quien tomamos los dichos asientos como por el dicho Bisorrey se han hecho diligencias, nunca hasta agora se a poblado ni hefetutado lo que deseabamos que hera la dicha población y la ynstrucción y conbersión de los naturales de aquellas provincias y traerlas a Nuestra Sancta Feé Cathólica, y como tengamos delante el bien y la salvación de aquellas ánimas, y abemos acordado de dar horden de enbiar personas rreliгиозas para que dotrinen los dichos yndios y otros buenos cristianos, nuestros vasallos , para que abiten y conversen con los naturales que ovieren en aquellas tierras y provincias de la Florida y para que con su trato y conbersación más facilmente sean dotrinados en Nuestra Santa Feé Cathólica y rreducidos a buenos usos y costunbres, y a perfeta policia; y vos Pero Menéndez de Abilés, cavallero de la Orden de Santiago por el deseo que teneis del servicio de Dios nuestro Señor y de que la Corona Real destos rreinos sea acrecentada, os abeis ofrecido y ofreceis de que en todo el mes de mayo primero que berná deste presente año teneis prestas y aparejadas a la bela en Sanctlucar de Barrameda o en el Puerto de Santa María o Vaya de Cadíz para partir con el primer tiempo, seis chalupas de cada cinquenta toneles más o menos y quatro zabras ligeras con sus rremos, armas y municiones cargados de bastimentos, puestas a punto de guerra, y que llevareis quinientos hombres, los ciento labradores y los ciento marineros, y los demas gentes officiales de mar y guerra y otros officiales de canteros y carpinteros, serradores, herreros, barberos, cirujanos, todos con sus armas, arcabuces y ba-

llestas, y municiones y rodela y las demas armas ofensibas y defensibas que os pareciere y fueren convenientes para la dicha jornada, y dos clérigos de Missa y areis otras cosas declaradas, todo ello a vuestra costa y minsión, sin que Nos ni los Reies que después de Nos vinieren seamos obligados a vos pagar ni satisfazer cosa alguna dello más de lo que esta capitulación vos fuere concedido, suplicando la mandase tomar con vos y otorgaros ciertas mercedes, sobre lo qual por la confianca y satisfacción que de vos tenemos y concurrir en vos la calidades que se rrequieren y por lo mucho y bien que nos abeis servido mandé tomar con vos, el dicho Pero Menéndez de Abiles, el dicho asiento y capitulación siguiente:

Primeramente, vos, el dicho Pero Menéndez, os encargueis y obligueis a tener para el dicho mes de Mayo prestas y aparejadas y a la bela en Sant Lucar de Barrameda o en el puerto de Santa María o Cádiz las dichas seis chalupas del porte questá dicho y quatro zabras ligeras con sus rremos, armas, artillería y municiones, cargadas de bastimento, puestas a punto de guerra y de llevar los dichos quinientos honbres y la demás gente de mar y guerra y clérigos y oficiales como está dicho.

Yten, os offreceis y obligais de tener presto para el dicho tienpo el galeón que teneis nonbrado San Pelayo, ques de porte de más de seiscientos toneles, nuevo del primer viaje y que le cargareis y fletareis para qualquiera lugar de las Yndias que quisieredes a media carga que podrá llevar o los dos tercios para vacío para llevar en él hasta trescientos honbres, de los dichos quinientos que ansí abeis de llevar, y alguna comida y mantenimiento que ovieren menester hasta la Dominica o al Cabo del Tiburon o de Sant Antón, como vos más quisieredes, questá setenta leguas de la Havana, poco más o menos, y otras tantas de la Florida, porque las otras chalupas no pueden llevar la dicha gente por ser navíos pequeños y descubiertos y enfermarían y morirían con el mucho sol y aguaceros que ay en las dichas partes ni podrían llevar el bastimento que para la dicha gente es menester por ser larga la jornada; y que llegado a la Dominica o parte que os pareciere, pasareis la gente de dicho galeón a las dichas chalupas y el dicho galeón yrá su viaje y vos con las dichas chalupas y quatro zabras yreis con los dichos quinientos honbres bastecidas apercibidas a punto de guerra, como dicho es, a la costa de la Florida a donde os obligais de ber y calar de la dicha costa los lugares mejores y más cómodos que os pareciere, costeando por la mar y calando y tentando por la tierra, a donde se podría mejor tomar puerto y sitio para poblar, y procurareis de tomar lengua si ay en la dicha costa o tierra algunos pobladores corsarios o otras cualquier naciones, no sujetos a Nos, y procurareis de los hechar por las mejores vias que pudieres y os pareciere, y que tomareis la dicha tierra de la Florida para Nos y en nuestro nonbre procurando atraer los naturales della a nuestra obediencia y describireis dende los Ancones y bahia de Sant Jusepe, ques una le-

gua de la Florida de la parte del Poniente hasta la Cabeca de los Martires questán en veinte y cinco grados, y de allí hasta la Tierra Nueva questá de cincuenta grados hasta setenta del este o hueste, y nortesur toda la costa para ver y calar los puertos y corrientes, rrocas y vaxios y ensenadas que huviere en la dicha costa, haziendolos marcar y señalar lo más precissamente que pudierdes por sus alturas y derrotas para que se sepa y entienda el secreto de la dicha costa y puertos que en ella oviere, y dentro deste año abeis de hazer lo que pudierdes y lo más dentro de tres años que por este asiento os obligais de poblar la dicha tierra.

Otrosí, os ofreceis y obligais de llevar para la dicha jornada el bastimento necesario para todos los dichos quinientos hombres para un año, con lo que se cuente el año desde que la gente esté en los navios para partir.

Yten, os obligais que desde el día que os hiciéredes a la bela, en tres años primeros siguientes, metereis en la dicha costa y tierra de la Florida hasta quinientos hombres que sean pobladores della, de los quales an de ser los doscientos casados y por lo menos los ciento y los demas an de ser por la maior parte labradores y oficiales para que la tierra sea cultivada con más facilidad y que sea gente limpia y no de los proybidos.

Yten, os ofreceis y obligais que con la dicha gente hedificareis y poblareis en los dichos tres años, dos o tres pueblos en los lugares y partes que mejor os pareciere, de cada cient vezinos por lo menos, y que en cada uno dellos abrá una casa grande de piedra tapia y madera, según el aparejo y disposición de la tierra, con su foso y puente levadiza la más fuerte que según el tiempo y aparejo se pudiere hazer para que siendo necesario se puedan a ell rrecoger los vezinos y anpararse de los peligos que les pueden subceder de yndios, o de corsarios o de otra gente.

Otrosí, os ofreceis y obligais que metereis dentro del dicho tienpo, en el número de la dicha gente que os obligais de llevar diez o doze religiosos por lo menos de la horden que os pareciere, personas que sean de buena vida y exenplo, y otro quatro de la compañía de Jhesús para que en la dicha tierra aya dotrina y puedan ser conbertidos los yndios a nuestra Santa Feé Cathólica y a nuestra obediencia.

Otrosí, os obligais de meter dentro del dicho tienpo en la dicha tierra cient cavallos e yeguas y dozientas terneras, quatrocientos puercos y quatrocientas obejas y algunas cabras y todos los demás ganados mayores y menores que os parecieren conbinientes.

Yten, os ofreceis que en todo lo que a vos posible, el dicho descubrimiento y población será con toda paz y amistad y christiandad y el gobierno de la gente de vuestro cargo la teneis en la maior christiandad y trato que vos pudierdes para que en todo será nuestro Señor y Nos servidos conforme a la yns-

trucción que se os dará que se suele dar a los que van a hazer semejantes poblaciones.

Otrosí, os obligais de meter dentro de los dichos tres años, en la dicha tierra, quinientos esclavos para nuestro servicio y de la gente que abeis de llevar y para que con más facilidad se hedifiquen los pueblos y se cultibe la tierra y para plantar cañas de acucar para los yngenios que se hizieren y para hazer los dichos yngenios.

Yten, por quanto en la costa de Bizcaya, Asturias y Galicia ay chalupas y canbras más a proposito que en el Andaluzia, y lo mesmo los oficiales de carpinteros, herreros y canteros y labradores, tenemos por bien y se declara que la parte desta armada y gente que saliere de aquellas partes puedan yr a las yslas de Canaria derechamente sin llegar a la dicha Villa de Sant Lucar y Cádiz, siendo primeramente visitados ante la justicia y persona que Nos señalaremos del puerto donde salieren la gente y navíos que van.

Otrosí, con condición que la dicha armada que así abeis de sacar, como está dicho, a de ser primero visitada por uno de nuestros oficiales, por la horden que se acostunbra a hazer, para que se abea si va con la horden y cumplimiento deste asiento.

Yten, obligais de dar fiancas legas, llanas y abonadas que Nos bolbereis quinze mil ducados de que os hazemos merced y mandamos dar si no estuviere despresto en todo el mes de mayo primero que viene deste presente año para salir con el primero y no tubieredes a punto todo lo que estais obligado a llevar para el dicho tiempo, conforme a este asiento; y las dichas fiancas las abeis de dar en esta Corte o en la ciudad de Sevilla, con sumisión a los de nuestro Consejo Real de las Yndias y otras nuestras justicias.

Y para ayuda a los grandes gastos, peligros y trabajos que vos el dicho Pero Menéndez abeis de tener en el dicho descubrimiento y población, lo que de nuestra parte se cumplirá con vos es lo siguiente:

Y para que con más voluntad, vos el dicho Pero Menéndez de Abiles, hagais y cunplais todo lo suso dicho es nuestra merced y voluntad de os hazer nuestro Governador y Capitán general de la dicha costa y tierra de la Florida y de todos los pueblos que en ella poblaredes por todos los días de vuestra vida y de un hijo o yerno vuestro, y abeis de llevar de Nos en cada un año, de salario dos mill ducados, los quales os han de ser pagados de los frutos y rrentas que nos pertenescrieren en la dicha tierra, y no los abiendo no hemos de ser obligados a os dar y pagar el dicho salario.

Otrosí, por os hazer más merced, prometemos de os dar de presente quinze mill ducados para que os podais aprestar.

Otrosí, vos daremos licencia para que destos reinos y Señorios o del Reino de Portugal o Yslas de Cabo Verde e Guinea, podais pasar y paseis, vos o quien vuestro poder oviere, a la dicha costa y tierra de la Florida quinientos



esclavos negros, en que aya o lo menos el tercio dellos henbras, libres de todos derechos que dellos nos puedan pertenecer; los quales abeis de llevar rregistrados para la dicha costa y tierra y no para otra parte alguna, so pena que si lo llevades a otra parte los ayais perdido.

Yten, vos haré merced de dar título de nuestro Adelantado de la dicha costa y tierra para vos y para vuestros herederos y sucesores perpetuamente.

Otrosí, vos daremos facultad para que a los que fueren a poblar la dicha tierra podais dar rrepartimientos y tierras y heredades para sus plantas, labranzas y crianças conforme a la calidad de cada uno y lo que a vos os pareciere, sin prejuizio de los yndios. Otrosí, poniendolos en la dicha tierra de la Florida Audiencia Real, os haremos merced de dar título de Alguazil Maior de la dicha Audiencia perpetuamente, para vos y para vuestros suscesores.

Yten, vos haremos merced en lo que ansí descubrièdes y poblaredes en la dicha tierra de la Florida, veinte y cinco leguas en quadra en un lugar o dos como vos más quisierdes que sea en buena tierra y en parte que os este bien comodamente sin perjuizio de los yndios, los quales sean para vos y para vuestros herederos y subcesores perpetuamente, para sienpre jamas, sin que en ellos tengais jurisdicción alguna ni minas porquesto a de quebrar para Nos. Y por quanto nos abeis suplicado os hagamos merced de dar título de Marques destas veinte y cinco leguas en quadra, que os mandamos dar, dezimos que acauando la jornada, y cumpliendo vos en todo lo contenido en este asiento vos haremos la merced que oviere lugar conforme a vuestros servicios.

Otrosí, vos hago merced de quinze partes, la una de todas las rrentas, minas, oro y plata, piedras y perlas y frutos que nos abeis suplicado de las tierras y provincias de la Florida, perpetuamente, para vos y para vuestros herederos y subcesores, quistas las costas.

Yten, vos haremos merced de dos pesquerías, quales vos escogeredes, en las dichas tierras de la Florida, la una de perlas y la otra de pescado, para vos y para vuestros herederos y subcesores perpetuamente.

Yten, hazemos merced a vos, el dicho Pero Menéndez, y a los vezinos y pobladores de la dicha tierra y a los que en adelante fueren a ella, que los diez años primeros después de poblada la dicha tierra de todo lo que llevaren para probeimiento de sus personas, mujeres e hijos y casa no pagueis ni paguen derechos de almoxarifazgo alguno.

Otrosí, hazemos merced a vos, el dicho Pero Menéndez, y a todos los vezinos y moradores, pobladores de la dicha tierra, que de todo el oro y plata, piedras y perlas que en ella se descubrieren no nos paguen más del diezmo por tiempo y espacio de diez años que se corren y se cuentan desde el día que hizieredes la primera fundición.

Otrosí, tenemos por bien, que ausentados vos, el dicho Pero Menéndez, de la dicha tierra podais dexar en vuestro lugar un lugarteniente para que en

todo tenga el mismo poder que vos, sienpre que querais benir a estos rreinos y nabegar en las Yndias, con que el teniente que nombraredes sea persona que tenga las calidades necesarias para ello.

Otrosí, tenemos por bien y os hazemos merced que en los dichos tres años en que abeis de cunplir este asiento no pagueis derechos de almoxarifazgos ni de galeras ni de otras ningunas cosas ni ynpusiciones assi de navíos como de bastimentos ni de armas ni de municiones ni rrescates para los yndios ni de ningún genero de comida ni bebida, para todo lo suso dicho no se a de pagar nada, como dicho es, como se entienda de lo que he dicho es que llevar para la dicha tierra de la Florida.

Otrosí, os damos licencia y facultad para que desde el día que partieredes destos rreinos para yr a la dicha tierra de la Florida en un año primero siguiiente podais traer en la navegación de las nuestras Yndias por término de seis años, dos galeones de porte de quinientos a seiscientos toneles y dos pataxes de ciento y cincuenta a doscientos toneles, armados y artillados, merchantes o de armada, en flota o fuera della como a vos mejor os estuviere y pareciere; y que los podais enbiar a cualquier parte o partes de la dicha nuestras Yndias que quisierdes juntos o dibididos, merchantes o de armada, en la flota o fuera della como a vos mejor os estuviere y pareciere y que los podais enbiar a qualquier parte o partes de las dichas nuestras Yndias que quisieredes juntos o dibididos, con que no puedan yr cargados de ningunas mercaderías, salvo de mercaderías de comer y beber y que de las que llevaren y traxeren y fletes y de los nabios no seais obligado a pagar abería para ninguna armada ni galeras, lo qual os damos para ayuda a las costas y trabajos que en la población de la dicha tierra de la Florida y provisión della abeis de hazer. Y que a la buelta de las Yndias podais traer las mercaderías que quisieredes libres de aberías, como esta dicho, con que no podais traer oro ni plata, perlas ni piedras, si no fuere los dineros que a vos tocaren y fueren vuestros y de lo procedido de los fletes de los galeones y pataxes, de lo cual, como dicho es, no se a de pagar abería.

Ansímismo, vos damos, licencia y facultad para que por tiempo de seys años podais sacar destos nuestros rreinos y de cualquiera parte dellos a las yslas de Puerto Rico, Sancto Dopmingo y Cuva y a la dicha tierra de la Florida y de aquellas partes a estas, seis chalupas y quatro zabras, juntas o dibididas, en flota o fuera della para el comercio y trato de la dicha tierra de la Florida, y para cumplir el dicho asiento y llevar en ello lo que vos pareciere y fuere menester para la gente questuviere en la dicha tierra de la Florida con que si en las dichas yslas de suso declaradas quisieredes descargar algunas cossas de comida y bebida, que las dichas chalupas y zabras llevaren, lo podais hazer para que en lugar de aquello carguen de ganados y de las cosas necesarias para la dicha tierra de la Florida; y que si alguna chalupa o zabra desta se quedan en aquellas partes o se perdiere, que podais traer otras en su lugar; los cuales di-

chos seis años an de correr, y queremos que corran, desde el mes de Junio del año benidero de mill y quinientos y sesenta y seis años en adelante. Y tenemos por bien que los maestros y pilotos que handuvieren en estos navios aunque no sean exsaminados con que sean naturales destos nuestros rreynos, pueden serbir de maestre y pilotos.

Yten, tenemos por bien y mandamos questas dichas chalupas y zabras, que an de andar los dichos seis años como esta dicho, no paguen ni an de pagar aberias ninguna de lo que llevaren por esta vez primera que salen a hazer su viaje a la dicha tierra de la Florida, pero que en el tiempo de los dichos tres años si de la dicha tierra de la Florida o yslas de Santo Domingo o Sant Juan de Puerto Rico o Cuba, traxeren algunas cossas a estos rreinos o destos rreinos sacaren bastimentos de comer y beber o otras cossas necesarias para la dicha tierra de la Florida, que en tal caso, paguen las aberias que se rreparten para las galeras que handan es esas costas del poniente de España, de ques Capitán General Don Alvaro de Vacán y tambien an de pagar las aberias de armada que van a las nuestras Yndias si las dichas chalupas y zabras nabegaron por si, uno de conserva de la dicha armada que va a las Yndias no han de pagar aberias de la dicha armada que así va a ellos.

Otrosí, tenemos por bien que en cuanto a los scrivanos que se an de llevar que en lo que toca a los dichos galeones y dos pataxes se guarde la horden que nos tenemos dada, pero en quanto a las seis chalupas y quatro zabras tenemos por bien y mandamos que para todas ellas juntas no se nombre por Nos más de un escrivano atento a que son navíos vuestros y que toda la costa de armas, artillería y municiones, bastimentos y todo lo demás que llevaren y an de llevar a de ser vuestro y a vuestro cargo, atento a que son navíos pequeños y de poca carga y que de llevar en cada uno escrivano vos sería muy costoso.

Yten, vos haremos merced, como por la presente vos le hazeos, de os dar título de nuestro Capitán General de toda la dicha armada y navíos y gente que en ellos anduviere, y dello os mandaremos dar título en forma.

Otrosí, queremos y tenemos por bien que todo lo que tomardes con los dichos galeones, zabras y pataches durante el tiempo de los dichos seys años a los cossarios sea vuestro y de vuestros herederos y subcesores, y lo mismo qualquier pressas que las quitardéis y tomaredes sin perjuicio del derecho del tributo, por quanto os hazemos merced dello.

Yten, se asienta y concierta que durante el tiempo de los dichos seys años, por ninguna manera no se os puedan enbargar ni detener para nuestro servicio ninguno de los dichos galeones ni pataxes, chalupas ni zabras en estos rreinos ni en las dichas nuestras Yndias; y si para alguna cosa forcossa y necesaria vos fueren enbargados algunos de los dichos navíos podais meter otros en su lugar del mismo porte, y quando no los metieredes, pasados los dichos seis años, los

podais traer conforme a este dicho asiento todo el tiempo que se os tuvieren enbargados o detenidos, y que los nuestros oficiales de la Casa de Contratación de Sevilla o de Cadíz, y otras qualesquier justicias destos rreinos o de las Yndias, donde los dichos navíos llegaren, les den todo el fabor para el breve y buen despacho dellos y les den los rregistros con toda brebedad porque no se detengan para los suso dicho, y que a los capitanes y oficiales que en ellos andubieren les den todo el fabor e ayuda y mandamos a las personas y justicias a quien lo en este capítulo toca que así lo guarden y cunplan.

Otrosí, si por casso Dios Nuestro Señor llevare desta presente vida a vos, el dicho Pero Menéndez, antes de los dichos tres años de manera que no podays aver cunplido de vuestra parte lo contenido en esta dicha capitulación, tenemos por bien y queremos que lo pueda cunplir la persona que vos nonbrases y señalardes y en falta de no dexarla nonbrada lo puede cunplir la persona que nonbrare el que heredare vuestra cassa y hazienda para poder gozar todas las mercedes contenidas en este asiento. Por ende, por la presente haziendo vos, el dicho Pero Menéndez, a vuestra costa lo suso dicho según y de la manera que de suso se contiene y cunpliendo todo lo contenido en esta capitulación y las instrucciones que se vos dieren y las que adelante se os darán y las provisiones y hordenanzas que hizieremos y mandaremos guardar para la dicha tierra y poblaciones y para el buen tratamiento y conbersión a Nuestra Santa Feé Cathólica de los naturales dellas y de los pobladores que a ellas fueren, digo y prometo, por mi Feé y palabra Real, que vos será guardada esta capitulación y todo lo que en ella contenido, en todo esto y por todo según y como en ella se contiene sin que se os vaya ni pase contra alguna della; y no la aziendo ni cunpliendo así vos, aquello a que os obligais, no seamos obligados a vos guardar y cunplir lo suso dicho ni cosa alguna dello antes os mandaremos castigar y proceder contra vos como contra persona que no guarda y cunple y traspasa los mandamientos de su Rey y Señor natural, y dello vos mandamos dar la presente, firmada de vuestra mano y señalada de los de nuestro Consejo de las Yndias y rrefrenada de Francisco de Eraso nuestro secretario. Fecha en Madrid, a veinte días del mes de Marzo, de mill y quinientos y sesenta y cinco años. Yo el Rey. Refrenada de Francisco de Erasso, y señalada de los del Consejo y de las Yndias.

## II

### LETTER FROM ST. PIUS V TO PEDRO MENÉNDEZ DE AVILÉS. ROME, 18TH OF AUGUST 1569

Amado hijo y noble varon; Salud, gracia y bendición de Nuestro Señor sea con vos Amén. Grandemente nos alegramos despues que entendimos que nuestro mui amado y caro hijo en Cristo, Felipe, Rei Cathólico, os habia proveido y señalado para el gobierno de la Florida, haciendoo Adelantado della; poque tenemos de vuestra persona tal relacion, y de los méritos de vuestra virtud y nobleza tan bastante y copioso informe, que sin duda creemos que no solamente cumplireis fielmente y con cuidado y diligencia el orden é instruccion que por Rei tan catholico os fuere dada, pero aun confiamos que vos, con vuestra discrecion y ábito, hareis todo lo necesario y que viéreis cumple al acrecientamiento de nuestra Santa Fe Catholica y para ganar mas almas para Dios; bien sé Yo que entendeis conviene que estos indios sean regidos y gobernados con buen seso y prudencia, porque los que están flacos en la Fe, por ser nuevamente convertidos, se esfuercen y confirmen, y los Idolátras se conviertan y reciban la Fe de Christo, para que los primeros alaben á Dios, conociendo los beneficios de su Divina misericordia, y los segundos, que aun son Infieles, con el ejemplo é imitacion de estos , que ya están fuera de su ceguedad, sean traídos al conocimiento de la Verdad. Pero no hay cosa que más importe para la conversion de estos indios é idolátras, que procurar con todas fuerzas que no sean escandalizados con los vicios y malas costumbres de los que pasan del Occidente á aquellas partes. Esta es la llave de este santo negocio, en que se encierra todo el ser de vuestra santa pretension.

Bien entendeis noble Varon, sin que yo lo diga, que gran ocasion se os ofrece en el cumplimiento y administracion de esta causa; de que redundo, lo uno, servir a Dios Nuestro Señor, lo otro, acrecentar el nombre de vuestro Rei, el qual de los hombres será estimado como del mismo Dios, amado y remunerado. Ansí que, dándoos nuestra paternal y apostólica bendicion, os pedimos y encargamos que deis entera fe y crédito á nuestro buen hermano Arzobispo

de Rofano, el cual en nuestro Nombre os significará nuestro deseo con mas dilatadas palabras.

Dado en Roma, en San Pedro, con el Anillo del Pescador, á 18 de Agosto de 1569, en el año tercero de Nuestro Pontificado. Antonio Floribelo Caccelino.

### III

#### LETTER FROM THE ADELANTADO DON PEDRO MENÉNDEZ DE AVILÉS TO HIS NEPHEW PEDRO MENÉNDEZ MÁRQUEZ, IN SANTANDER, DATED THE 8TH OF SEPTEMBER 1574, TEN DAYS BEFORE HIS DEATH

Muy magnifico Señor. Somos hoy siete de Septiembre de 74, y no he visto carta de Vuestra merced despues que parti desta costa; y aunque la flota de la Nueva España llevo a Sanlúcar ha mas de veynte dias, tampoco la he tenido, ni nuevas de su salud, la qual dé Dios a Vuestra merced con tanto acrecientamiento como yo le deseo. Tampoco he tenido con esta flota nuevas de la Florida, mas de las que me traxo Juan de Quiros, que fueron quedar todos buenos.

Como Vuestra merced habrá sabido, S.M. me mando quedar en esta costa para juntar una gruesa armada conque pudiese socorrer los sus Estados de Flandes, y así la tuve presta en todo Junio, de ciento y cinquenta belas y doce mil hombres de mar y guerra, gente muy principal y lucida; que no á quedado por acá hombre diestro que no se haya metido en ella; y por yr la guerra de Flandes en mucha mejoría y el Turco haber abajado la Goleta con mucho poder, ha querido que la armada esté queda para socorrer á la mayor necesidad. Y como el invierno se ha entrado, no sé lo que me ordenarán; tengo aviso que Pedro del Castillo quiere despachar una zabra á la Florida. He querido dar á Vuestra merced cuenta desto, y que los trabajos de por acá son insoportables, sin género de premio, dexado que lo principal es andar tambien ocupado en el servicio de Dios y del Rey contra estos herejes luteranos, por el acrecentamiento de nuestra Santa fe Cathólica; y despues de la salvación de mi alma no hay cosa en este mundo que mas desee que verme en la Florida para acabar mis dias salvando almas.

Y así, dando cuenta á S.M. del descontento que traigo en verme apartado de la Florida, me ha hecho mercé de decirme que todas las veces que se sufriere darme licencia para ello, lo hará de muy buena voluntad; y espero en Dios lo hará a la primavera, porque sin duda tengo que este invierno se allanará lo de Flandes; y como esto sea, yo quedo con libertad para me ir de hecho á la Florida, para no salir de allí en cuanto viviere; que estos son to-



dos mis deseos y felicidad. Nuestro Señor lo haga como puede y vea ques menester.

Parece que la Audiencia de la Nueva España escribió a S.M. que mi conquista por Panoco se entendiese desde el rio de las Palmas, que está cuarenta leguas de allí; y habiéndolo yo entendido, he ido a la Corte por mandado de S.M. Quexeme dello al Consejo, y volviéndolo á proveer aprovando el asiento; la cédula de lo cual envio al Licenciado Lope de Miranda para que se tome la posesion y escriba á Don Luis de Velasco haga esto en mi nombre, en caso de Vuestra Merced no vaya á hacerlo, que esto seria para mí mayor contento; y es cierto que para mí tengo que es uno de los mejores asientos que hay en todo lo descubierto, honroso y provechoso para todos los pobladores que allí vinieren, y que tendrán todo contento; aunque yo siempre tendré mi estancia y asiento en donde la tengo, mudándome cuando vaya a Guatari ó Cano, ó en el mejor puesto de tierra gruesa que hubiere la tierra adentro, no muy lejos de la marina.

Tengo prevenidos gran golpe de labradores, así en esta terruca, como portugueses del rio de Miño, para que se embarquen en Bayona; toda ella gente criada á muchos trabajos, y oficiales de canteros y carpinteros, que me parece de la demás provecho que hay en estos reynos, muy a propósito para las poblaciones que de presente tenemos en la Florida, como las que hemos de hacer, y para en Panuco, si á Vuestra merced le pareciere. Y para mí seria mucho contento en recibiendo V.M. esta carta diese orden de venirse á ver conmigo, que sin duda tengo que el mes de Marzo ó Abril que viene me hallará en Madrid; porque aunque pase á Flandes, está tratado para que en aquel tiempo me halle allí, para que si fuere necesario acrecentar la armada de naos gruesas y galeras, lo pueda S.M. hacer, y ser tan poderoso en esta mar de Poniente, y en especial Flandes, Inglaterra y Francia, que no haya resistencia contra la armada que traxere, y lo acabaría todo de una vez; aunque, como tengo dicho, espero en Dios lo quedará este invierno, y cuando yo esté libre, nos podremos ir juntos, y no lo estando se ira Vuestra merced con muy buen socorro, así para lo poblado como para lo de Panoco.

Llevará mucha y buena gente de pobladores y gente de guerra, con que podré estar descansado y tener proveido medianamente lo uno y lo otro para el buen principio de que en perpetuidad quede el Santo Evangelio plantado en aquellas provincias. Y para que este socorro vaya el mas crecido que sea posible, de la hacienda que me pertenece y se me debe en Florida de los bastimentos y municiones que he metido y meto cada día, traerme ha Vuestra merced lo mas que pudiere, y lo entregará todo a Pedro del Castillo, para que él vaya proveyendo á Vuestra merced de todo lo que hubiere menester por la orden que yo le diere. Con alguna fragata ligera, de remo y vela, que sea suficiente para la tormenta, se podrá pasar con brevedad, y llegado á estos reinos, dar

conmigo en cualquier parte que yo esté, para que juntos á Vuestra merced, de por sí, cuando no fuere posible, ir yo tan presto que pueda volver con toda brevedad.

A la señora Doña Maria beso las manos; y habiendo Vuestra merced de venir por acá, de mi consejo y parecer la dexaria en la Florida, donde seria mas servida y regalada que en otra parte de las Indias.

El duplicado desta carta envió a Don Diego de Velasco y á Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, mi sobrino, para en caso de que Vuestra merced no esté en Florida, se la encamine donde quiera que estubiere, para que la reciba con brevedad y se resuelva con ella en lo que hubiere de hacer; á los Señores Bernaldo de Miranda y Diego Loudomio de Otalora, no escribo por no tener qué; Vuestra merced les dé mis encomiendas que reciban esta por suya, que querria estar en parte para hacerles bien, y cuando yo pudiere no faltará en mi esta voluntad.

A las Señoras Doña Elvira y Doña Catalina beso las manos, no olvidando á la Señora Doña Magdalena, que por no estar yo en la Florida me pesa verla allá; yo le ayudaré como propia hija, y lo mesmo á Doña Maria de Solis, mi sobrina, y no olvidando á las que llevó consigo Don Diego de Velasco; y si á Vuestra merced le tomare esta en parte que le parezca tomar primero la posesion de Panoco, y cobrar algun situado que se debe en México para traer mediano recaudo de dinero consigo, la podrá hazer, aunque para esto no debiera haber dilación en la venida de Vuestra merced, y porque en cuanto no tomar la posesion no me corre el término de hacer los pueblos.

Vuestra merced mire y considere lo uno y lo otro, y remitiéndoselo todo en este particular, haga lo que mejor le pareciere. Y Nuestro Señor le alumbre que acierte á elegir lo mejor, y guarde y acreciente la muy magnífica persona y casa de Vuestra merced, como yo os deseo. De Santander á 8 de Setiembre de 1574.



#### IV

### THE WILL OF THE ADELANTADO PEDRO MENÉNDEZ DE AVILÉS MADE IN SANLÚCAR DE BARRAMEDA, DATED THE 7TH OF JANUARY 1574

En el nombre de Dios. Amén. Sepan cuantos esta carta de testamento é última voluntad vieren, como yo el Adelantado Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, Cavallero de la Orden de Santiago, Adelantado de la Florida é Capitán General de la Armada y galeones de S.M., estante el presente en esta villa de San Lúcar de Barrameda enfermo del cuerpo y sano de la voluntad, y en ni seso é buena memoria y cumplido entendimiento, el cual, Dios Nuestro Señor tubo por bien de me dar, y tomando como tomo por abogada á la gloriosa Virgen Santa María, y al bien abenturado Apostol Santiago, cuya milicia tengo profesado, que seán abogados é intercesores con mi Señor Jesucristo, que tenga por bien de me salvar, y creiendo como creo bien y fielmente en el misterio de la Santísima Trinidad, que es Padre, Hijo y Espíritu Santo, tres personas y un solo Dios verdadero, en quien todo fiel cristiano debe bien creer, y sin ello no se puede salvar; y cudiciando poner mi ánima en las mas llana y derecha carrera que podré para salbar, y mis herederos en paz y concordia dejar, hago y ordeno este mi testamento, en la forma y manera siguiente:

Primeramente, digo é declaro que atento por andar como ando en servicio de S.M. en la guerra, y tener como tengo en ello ocupada la hacienda que Dios me ha dado, y no tener cosa cierta de que de presente poder testar, y ser como es Pedro del Castillo, vecino de Cádiz, mi deudo y grande amigo, y siempre me ha acudido y socorrido para poder sustentar las cosas de mi cargo, y especialmente en la conquista y población de la Florida, y tener entera satisfacción de su cristiandad y verdad, le dejo por mi albacea y testamentario, y le doy poder cumplido é bastante forma para que pueda cobrar lo que S.M. me debe, é pueda acabar y fenezer cualquier pleitos é demandas que tubiere puestas y se me pusiere; y si fuere necesario ponerlas de nuevo, las pueda poner; y así mesmo le doy poder para que pueda cobrar y cobre todo lo que se me debiere ó pareciere debérseme en cualquier manera, y todos los demas bienes

que tubiere ó tengo, así muebles como raices, navíos y licencias de S.M. para galeones, pataches y chalupas, zabras y mercaderias cualesquier, que en cualquier manera me pertenezcan é pertenecerme pueda; y como los fuere cobrando el dicho Pedro del Castillo, baya pagando las deudas que yo pareciere deber por escrituras, albaales y en otra cualquier manera, y que el dicho Pedro del Castillo se haga así mismo pagado de lo que yo le debo, de lo primero que de los dichos mis bienes hobiere y cobraré; é pagadas todas mis deudas, de lo que quedare pueda comprar y compre tantas rentas y posesiones adonde y como le pareciere, y pueda de lo que así comprare vincular un mayorazgo en virtud de una Real Cédula de S.M. que para ello tengo, el cual mayorazgo pueda poner y ponga el dicho Pedro del Castillo los vínculos y gravámenes que le pareciere; el cual dicho mayorazgo, dende agora yo el dicho Adelantado pongo en caveza de Doña Catalina Menéndez, mi hija legítima, y de Doña María de Solis, mi muger, para que la dicha Doña Catalina lo goce por todos los días de su vida, y despues de ella el hijo mayor que tubiere, y en falta de hijo varon, la hija mayor, prefiriendo siempre el varon á la muger, aunque sea menor en días, aunque si tubiere mas que un hijo mayor, digo varon, y el mayor no quisiese llamarse del apellido é nombre de Menéndez de Avilés y se lo llamare el segundo hijo, el tal haya el dicho mi mayorazgo; y en caso que la dicha Doña Catalina Menéndez, mi hija, no tenga varon ninguno, ni hija, que pueda heredar el dicho mayorazgo, es mi voluntad lo haya despues de los días de la dicha Doña Catalina, Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, mi sobrino, y de la dicha mi muger, hijo de Alvar Sanchez de Avilés, mi hermano, y de Doña Berengela de Valdés, su muger, y sus hijos y herederos con el mismo gravamen arriba dicho é declarado; y en caso que tampoco tenga hijos el dicho mi sobrino, haya y herede el dicho mayorazgo, Doña María Menéndez, mi hija, muger de Don Diego de Velasco, á quien desde agora llamo al dicho mayorazgo y de ella los hijos que hubiere, por la forma y orden en esta cláusula contenido.

Iten, mando y es voluntad que la dicha Catalina Menéndez de Avilés haya de gozar de la merced que S.M. me hizo de las provincias de la Florida, con todas las rentas y cosas á ellas anexas y concernientes, y las demas preeminencias, mercedes y oficios que S.M. por el asiento ha tomado y mandó tomar sobre el descubrimiento y población de la Florida, me tiene fecho, esceto que las veinte é cinco leguas en cuadro que S.M. me hizo merced en el dicho asiento, é de que me dará título de marques, questo quiero y es mi voluntad que dende luego, despues que yo sea fallecido lo haya y herede Doña María Menéndez de Avilés, mi hija, muger de Don Diego de Velasco, y sus hijos, y no teniendo hijos legítimos que lo hereden, vuelva al tronco.

Iten, digo por cuanto S.M. mando tomar asiento y capitulación conmigo sobre la poblacion y conquista de Panuco, mando que si Pedro Menéndez

Marques, mi sobrino, quisiere tomar á su cargo la dicha conquista, é poner en egecucion el dicho asiento, que lo pueda hacer, é dende agora le hago donación de ello conforme y de la manera que yo le tengo de S.M. para que lo gece todos los días de su vida, y despues de él los hijos que tubiere, con tal gravamen, que se han de llamar y llamen del apellido de Menéndez de Avilés y no de otros, so pena que pierdan de haberlo ni gozarlo, y en caso que el dicho Pedro Menéndez Marques no tenga hijo legítimo, y no llamándose el dicho nombre y apellido, segun dicho es, ha de venir la dicha manda y donación a la persona que heredare el dicho mayorazgo y vínculo, segun dicho es; y en caso que el dicho Pedro Menéndez Marques no quisiera encargarse de la dicha conquista, como dicho es, ó antes de lo acetar muriese, en tal caso nombro á Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, mi sobrino, para que éntre en lugar del dicho Pedro Menéndez Marqués, segun está declarado, y en falta de los susodichos, éntre con mi mayorazgo.

Item: mando que en lo que toca á mi entierro y misas y obsequias, lo remito á dicho Pedro del Castillo, para que lo faga de la suerte y manera que le pareciere y bien visto le fuere, porque así mismo para todo ello le doy el dicho mi poder cumplido.

Item: mando a Doña Elvira Menéndez, mi sobrina, muger de Hernando de Miranda, 300 ducados por buenas obras que me ha hecho. Item: mando a Doña Maria de Pumar, viuda, que está en la Florida en la compañía de mi muger, otros 300 ducados, para ayuda de su casamiento.

Item: mando a Doña Maria de Solis, sobrina de mi muger, 300 ducados para ayuda de su casamiento.

Item: mando á tres hermanas de Juan Quiros, mis sobrinas, á cada una doscientos ducados, para ayuda de su casamiento, y las tres que están por casar.

Item: digo é declaro que por quanto yo tengo tratado con el dicho Pedro del Castillo, de hacer en Avilés una memoria por mi ánima, y demas padres y deudos, le doy el dicho poder al dicho Pedro del Castillo, para que pueda comprar la renta que les pareciere que convenga para la dicha memoria, de la forma que les pareciere en la cantida é modo, y todo lo remito al dicho Pedro del Castillo, y lo que hiziere dende agora lo apuebo; y cumplido e pagado este mi testamento, y lo en él contenido, dejo y establezco por mi legítima heredera en el remanente de mis bienes, derechos y acciones, á la dicha Doña Catalina Menéndez, mi hija legítima, y Doña Maria de Solis, mi muger, á la cual establezco por mi universal heredera; y reboco y anulo y doy por ninguno y de ningun valor ni efecto todas y cualesquier testamento, mandas y codicilos que haya fecho antes de éste, que quiero que no vala ni hagan fe sus notas y registros en juicio ni fuera de él, salvo de este que agora fago, que es mi última y determinada voluntad.

Item: declaro y es mi voluntad que la persona que heredare mi casa y hubiere mi mayorazgo, segun de la forma que está dicho, sea con tal gravamen y condición que teniendo edad de veinte años haya de residir é resida con su casa y muger, si la tubiere, en la provincia de la Florida tiempo de diez años, y en caso que herede dicho mayorazgo hembra, por falta de varon, haya de ser con el propio gravamen de quella y su marido hayan de residir el dicho tiempo de diéz años en las dichas Indias de la Florida; porque mi fin y celo es procurar que en perpetuidad la Florida se pueble, para que el Santo Evangelio se estienda é plante entre aquellas provincias; y entiendase que la mujer por falta de varon que heredare mi mayorazgo, sea con el propio gravamen dicho, con que de edad de veinte é hasta cinco años á lo mas largo, se case para poder cumplir lo que está dicho de ir a residir a las provincias de la Florida con su marido, con tal que si ansí no lo hiciere haya mi mayorazgo el segundo llamado a él, y en falta de que los llamados á el dicho mayorazgo no tengan herederos, segun y por la orden que está dicha desde agora, llamo al dicho mayorazgo al deudo mas cercano por padre y madre, preferidos los de padre varon á los de la madre; y este propio gravamen y condición pongo á la persona que hubiere de heredar los de Panuco, conforme á lo que arriba está declarado.

Fago la carta en la villa de San Lúcar de Barrameda á 7 dias del mes de Enero de 1574 años, siendo testigos presentes Pedro Delguera, y Pedro de Aguirre, y Juan perez, y Martin Suarez, Berlandino de Ureña, estantes en esta villa y S.S. á quien yo el dicho Escribano público doy fe que conozco, lo firmo de su nombre en este registro y entiende que el gravamen de residir en la Florida, como está dicho, comprende á quien gozare las veinte y cinco leguas en cuadro, con título de Marqués. Pedro Menéndez.

Ante mí, Luis de león, Escribano Publico. E yo, Luis de Leon, Escribano público de San Lúcar de Barrameda, por Duque mi señor é aprobado por S.M. Real, é por los señores de su Real Consejo, lo fize escribir é fize aquí mi signo y soy testigo. Luis de leon, Escribano público.



CODICIL TO THE WILL MADE IN SANTANDER BY THE ADELANTADO PEDRO MENÉNDEZ DE AVILÉS ON THE 15TH OF SEPTEMBER 1574

In Dei Nomine. Amén. Sepan quantos esta carta de testamento y lo en él contenido vieren, como yo, pedro menéndez de Avilés, Adelantado de las provincias de la Florida y Capitán General dellas y de la Armada que anda en la carrera de Indias, y de la que al presente está junta en el puerto de la villa de Santander, estando enfermo de mi cuerpo de enfermedad que Dios Nuestro Señor tubo por bien darme, aunque sano de mi juicio natural, tal qual su Divina Magestad fué servido darme, temiéndome de la muerte, que es cosa natural á todo hombre, deseando poner mi ánima en el camino de la salvacion, creyendo como berdadera y firmemente creo en la Santisima Trenidad, Padre, Hijo y Espiritu Santo, tres personas distintas y un solo Dios verdadero, é todo aquello que tiene é cree y manda tener y creer la Santa Madre Iglesia de Roma, como católico cristiano, otorgo é conozco que hago y ordeno este mi testamento ó codicilo, en la manera siguiente:

Primeramente encomiendo mi ánima a Dios Nuestro Señor y Salvador Jesucristo, y suplico á su Divina Magestad quando sea servido de llevarme de esta vida, por los méritos de su Sanctissima Passion, tomando como tomo por intercessora y avogada á la Sanctissima Virgen Santa Maria, su vendita Madre y Señora Nuestra, para que aya misericordia de mi ánima. Amén.

Iten: mando que quando la voluntad de Jesucristo Redentor y Salvador nuestro fuere servido de me llevar de esta pressente vida, si muriere en la villa ó puerto de la villa de Santander, donde al pressente estoy en la pressente Armada, de que soy, en nombre de S.M. del Rey Don Felipe, mi Señor, Capitan general, ó en otra qualquier parte, que mi cuerpo sea llevado á la villa de Avilés, y allí sea sepultado en la Iglesia de Sant Nicolás, donde estan sepultados mis antepasados.

Iten: mando que mis cavecaleros gasten é despendan en cumplimiento de mi ánima en missas é sacrificios en la Iglesia Colegial de los Cuerpos Santos,

de la villa de Santander, y en el monasterio de Señora Sancta Clara, y en la Iglesia de Sant Nicolás de la villa de Avilés, en missas y sacrificios por mi ánima é de mis antepassados, hasta en cantidad de 400 ducados de oro, de los quales salgan el gasto de cera y ofrendas que se hicieren, así al tiempo de mi enterramiento, como antes y despues, todo por la orden que á mis cavecaleros paresciene, y algun luto si se sacare.

Iten: digo y declaro que antes de este tengo hecho y otorgado otro mi testamento ante un Escribano, en la ciudad de Cadiz, que no tengo memoria al presente de su propio nombre, el qual dicho mi testamento dexé cerrada en poder y casa de Pedro del Castillo, vecino de Cádiz; digo y mando que el dicho testamento se abra, vea y cobre y se guarde é cumpla y execute con puro efeto todo lo en él contenido, porque así conviene para el servicio de Dios nuestro Señor y descargo de mi conciencia; y este que al pressente hago é otorgo por este mi codicilo, se entiende ser y que sea de mas de lo conocido en el dicho primero testamento.

Iten: digo y declaro que yo he tenido é tengo por mandato de S.M. la Escribania mayor de sus Armadas, de la qual supplico á S.M. mande hacer merced al subcesor en mi cassa y mayorazgo.

Iten: digo y confieso y encargo al señor Don Diego de Maldonado, mi Teniente General en la pressente Armada, 2.500 reales de plata, que me prestó en madrid, poco mas ó menos, lo que él dixere, porque es tan principal cavallero que no dirá sino verdad. Mando que de lo mexor parado le sean pagados sin descuento alguno.

Iten: digo y declaro que en virtud de una mi libranza, dió el pagador Fortuno de Ozaeta 1.000 reales de plata á Alonso de Escobedo, Capitan de una de las zabras de S.M. mando que al dicho pagador se le pague, y el dicho Alonso de Escobedo dé cuenta dellos.

Iten: digo que ya ha treinta y dos años, poco mas ó menos, que sirvo á S.M. por Capitan General de sus Armadas reales, en el qual tiempo he gastado muchas sumas de maravedis, que devo á causa de no haber hecho S.M. ninguna merced para satisfacer las quales dichas deudas y descargar mi conciencia.

Suplico a S.M. que, como muchas veces me ha prometido de palabra, me haga merced de alguna ayuda de costa con que se me puedan satisfacer las dichas mis deudas; porque en realidad de la verdad, al presente no tengo cossa que me aconsole mi espíritu y ánima, y esto suplico a S.M. con toda homildad que puedo y devo, en recompensa de tantos trabajos y servicios que he passado y hecho, así con la persona como con el espíritu, usando siempre de mucha lealtad y fidelidad como al servicio de S.M. devo.

Iten: mando que se haga inventario de mis vestidos y de mis armas y escripturas y papeles, y particularmente de las cartas y memoriales de S.M., que están en mi poder; y que del entretanto que S.M. otra cossa mandase, pongan

y esten de manifiesto y por inventario en poder de Juan Menéndez de recalde, criado de S.M.

Iten: digo y mando que á Vartolomé de Leon y Quiros, mis sobrinos, que me han servido de pages muy vien, se les den cada 200 ducados de oro de lo mexor parado de mis bienes.

Iten: digo y declaro que S.M. demas de lo que le suplico me haga merced me debe y le encargo de muchas sumas de maravedies, ansí de mis gajes como de dineros que he gastado en su servicio, quiero y es mi voluntad que el dicho heredero los cobre; y á S.M. suplico se los mande pagar, mandando averiguar lo que se me deve.

Para cumplir é pagar este mi testamento, é las mandas é legados en él contenidos, dé por mis cavezaleros al Señor Don Diego de Maldonado y á Juan menéndez de recalde y á Juan de Escalante, vecinos y estantes en la villa de Santander y Vilvao, y abitantes al presente en esta villa de Santander, é Luis Gonzalez de oviedo, vecino de Oviedo, y Hernando de Miranda, mi hierno, vecino de Avilés.

A todos los quales y á cada uno é qualquier dellos in solidum, doy poder, quiero y mando que de lo mejor parado de mis bienes, vendiéndolos en almoneda ó fuera della, ó tomándolos, hagan cumplir é cumplan este mi testamento y cumplimiento de ánima, segun que yo lo dexo declarado.

Y ansí cumplido, de todos los demas bienes, muebles y raices, derechos y acciones á mí pertenecientes, dexo por mi heredera legítima á Doña Catalina Menendez, mi legítima hija, conforme y al tenor de lo que por mi dispuesto por el sobredicho testamento que ansí dexo hecho é otorgado en poder del dicho Pedro del Castillo, vecino de la dicha ciudad de Cadiz, é lo he aquí como incorporado como ai palabra por palabra aquí fuese inserto, é revoco y anulo é doy por ninguno é de ningun valor y efeto otros qualesquier testamento ó testamentos, codicilo ó codicilos que antes del sobredicho referido, y de este que al pressente hago, aya fecho y otorgado, ansí de escripto como de palabra, para que no valgan, salvo el sobredicho referido, y este que al pressente hago, lo qual todo quiero que valga por mi testamento é por mi codicilo, é por mi última y postrimera voluntad, ó por aquella via é forma que de derecho mexor aya lugar. En fe é testimonio de lo qual todo que dicho ea, otorgué la pressente escritura á nombre y á presencia de Pedro de Ceballos, Escribano de S.M., é del número de los de Santander, é de los testigos de yuso escritos, al qual ruego y pido lo escriba é dé signado en manera que haga fe que fué fecho é leído é otorgado estando en la cassa y sitio que dicen de Hano, jurisdicción de la dicha villa de Santander, miércoles á 15 dias del mes de Septiembre, año del nascimiento de Nuestro Salvador Jesucristo de 1574 años, estando pressentes por testigos á todo lo que dicho es, é á ver leer y otorgar este dicho testamento al dicho señor Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, Fray Juan de Madariaga,

Guardian del Monasterio de Sant Francisco de Santander; y el Licenciado Martín Ruiz de Olalde, Médico, vecino de la villa de Portugalete, é Gabriel de Untoria, Boticario de la Armada, vecino de la villa de Llanes; y Maestre Andrés de Larraguti, Cirujano de la dicha Armada, é Martin de Villachica, vecino de Cadiz. Y el dicho Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, otorgante, é los dichos señores, lo firmaron de sus nombres en el registro del Escribano conozco al dicho otorgante é así mismo lo firmé.

Iten: digo y declaro que yo ube prestado al Capitan Gutierre de Solis hasta 300 ducados, poco mas ó menos, como se contiene por escritura pública que dello se hizo, de los quales dichos 300 ducados, ó de lo que es, no he recibido nada dellos; mando se cobre del dicho Capitan Gutierre de Solis la mitad, y de la otra mitad le hago gracia y no se la pidan.

Fecho y otorgado ut supra, testigos los dichos, é lo firmó el dicho Pedro Menendez, Adelantado, é los dichos testigos y el pressente Escribano.

Dicen las firmas: Pedro Menendez, el Licenciado Martin Ruiz de Olalade, Fray Juan de Madariaga, Andres de Lagarruti, Gabriel de Untoria, Martin de Villachica. Passó ante mí, Pedro de Ceballos.

Y despues de lo susodicho, en la dicha cassa de Hano, á los quince días del dicho mes de Septiembre del dicho año de 1574, el dicho Señor Adelantado Pedro menendez, en presencia de mí el dicho Pedro de Ceballos, Escribano é testigos yosso escriptos, dixo que demas y allende de lo sobredicho mandaba é mandó á Don Valtasar de Cien Fuegos, Alferez del Estandarte Real de la sobredicha Armada, 200 ducados, los quales les sean pagados de mis bienes. E así mismo dixo que mandaba y mandó a Don Francisco Maldonado, hermano del dicho Don Diego Maldonado, otros 200 ducados de oro, los quales mando por la voluntad que les tengo.

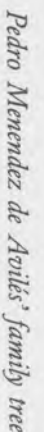
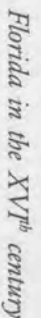
Mas mando al Reverendo Fray Luis de Madariaga, Guardian del Monasterio de San Francisco de la Villa de Santander que al presente es, otros 10 ducados de limosna, y por que en sus oraciones se acuerde de suplicar á Nuestro Señor por mi ánima; y estas dichas mandas el dicho señor Pedro Menendez, Adelantado, dixo que otorgaba é otorgó en la manera susodicha, estando pressente por testigo á esto que dicho es, el Licenciado cereceda, Médico, vecino de portugalete, é Martin de Villachica, criado de Don Juan Menendez de recalde, y el dicho Adelantado otorgante, al qual yo el dicho Escribano doy fe conozco. Lo frmó de su nombre en el dicho registro y así mesmo lo firmaron los dichos testigos é yo el dicho Escribano.

Dicen las firmas: Pedro Menendez Cereceda, el Licenciado Martin Ruiz de Olalde, Martin de Villachica. Pasó ante mí, Pedro de Ceballos.

E yo el sobredicho Pedro de Ceballos, Escribano é Notario público de S.M. en la su corte y en todos los sus reynos é señorios é del número de la dicha villa de Santander, que al otorgamiento del dicho testamento ó codicilo, y de todo lo en ello presente, fuí en uno con los dichos testigos, é del otorgamiento del dicho Pedro Menendez de Avilés, Adelantado susodicho, que en el registro con los dichos testigos firmaron sus nombres á los cuales doy fe conozco.

Este dicho traslado del dicho testamento ó codicilo y todo lo que en él contenido escribir y trasladar en esta foja y media de papel de pliego entero, y en fin de cada plana va rúbrica acostumbrada y para lo dar al dicho Hernando de Miranda, cavezalero é yerno del dicho Adelantado, que me lo pidio signado este traslado, sin embargo que otra vez antes desta se lo dí signado, que todo se entienda é otro qualquier traslado que aya dado signado de este dicho testamento ser uno mismo todos, como en efecto lo es, é por ende lo subscrebí y conozco al dicho Hernando de Miranda, é fize aquí este mi signo que á tal. En testimonio de verdad, Pedro de Ceballos.

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## VII

### CHRONOLOGY

- 1460 Birth of Juan Ponce de León, first Adelantado of Florida.
- 1475 Birth of Lucas Vázquez de Ayllón.
- 1480 Birth of Pánfilo de Narváez.
- 1500 Birth of Hernando de Soto.
- 1507 Birth of Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca.
- 1510 Birth of Tristán de Luna.
- 23.II.1512 First "Capitulación" granted to Juan Ponce de León, and the first for Florida.
- 3.III.1513 Juan Ponce de León's departure from Puerto Rico.
- 23.III.1513 Juan Ponce de León's arrival in Florida.
- 8.IV.1513 Juan Ponce de León takes possession of Florida.
- 21.IX.1513 Juan Ponce de León returns from Florida to Puerto Rico.
- 27.IX.1514 Juan Ponce de León's second "Capitulación" for going to Florida.
- 15.II.1519 Birth of Pedro Menéndez de Avilés.
- 26.II.1521 Juan Ponce de León's second voyage to Florida.
- 1521 Juan Ponce de León's death in Puerto Rico.
- 2.VI.1523 Lucas Vázquez de Ayllón's "Capitulación" is granted for the conquest of Florida.

- VII.1526 Vázquez de Ayllón's departure from La Española for Florida.
- 18.X.1526 Lucas Vázquez de Ayllón's death in Florida.
- 11.XII.1526 Pánfilo de Narváez's "Capitulación" for the conquest of Florida is signed.
- 17.VI.1527 Departure of Pánfilo de Narváez's expedition from the port of Sanlúcar bound for Florida.
- 12.IV.1528 Pánfilo de Narváez's arrival in Florida.
- 22.IX.1528 Pánfilo de Narváez' departure for the Gulf of Mexico.
- IX.1528 Pánfilo de Narváez's is lost at sea.
- 23.VII.1536 Arrival of Alvar Cabeza de Vaca, Dorantes and Castillo in Mexico.
- 9.VII.1537 The arrival in Spain of the three surviving unicorns from Pánfilo de Narváez's expedition.
- 20.IV.1537 Hernando de Soto's "Capitulación".
- 6.IV.1538 Hernando de Soto's departure from the port of Sanlúcar.
- 25.V.1539 Hernando de Soto's arrival in Florida.
- 1539-1540 Hernando de Soto and his men winter in Iniahica.
- 18.X.1540 Hernando de Soto' arrival in Nauvila.
- V.1541 Hernando de Soto discovers the Mississippi.
- 1541-1542 Hernando de Soto's last illness and death.
- 18.VII.1543 Hernando de Soto's men (now under the command of Luis de Moscoso) arrive in the Gulf of Mexico.
- 10.IX.1543 Luis de Moscoso's arrival at the mouth of the river Panuco.
- 28.XII.1547 Permission given by Don Antonio de Mendoza, Viceroy of Mexico, for the Friar Luis de Cáncer's expedition.
- 1549 Friar Luis de Cáncer's expedition leaves Spain.
- 29.V.1549 Friar Luis de Cáncer's fries in Florida.
- 1552 Pedro Menéndez de Avilés is made Captain General of the Indies Armada.

- 1554 Pedro Menéndez de Avilés is ordered to accompany Philip II on his way to marry Mary Tudor.
- 22.III.1557 Pedro Menéndez de Avilés is sent with reinforcements to St. Quentin.
- 14.VI.1557 Pedro Menéndez de Avilés is made Captain General of the Indies section of the Armada. He is also conceded the Holy Cross of the "Zarza".
- 17.V.1558 The "Habit" of Santiago is bestowed on Pedro Menéndez de Avilés.
- 1.XI.1558 Tristán de Luna is chosen to lead another expedition.
- 11.XI.1559 Tristán de Luna leaves from the port of Veracruz.
- 14.VIII.1559 Tristán de Luna arrives in Florida and founds Santa María Filipina.
- IV.1561 Tristán de Luna is demoted by the Viceroy of New Spain.
- 9.IV.1561 Captain Angel de Villafañe arrives in Santa María Filipina.
- 23.II.1561 Royal Decree by which it is prohibited to go to Florida at all.
- 18.II.1562 Jean Ribault and René de Laudonnière set off for Florida.
- 30.V.1562 The French arrive in Florida.
- 20.VII.1562 Ribault and Laudonnière return to France.
- 1.VI.1563 Pedro Menéndez de Avilés is put in prison by the "Casa de Contratación".
- 26.IV.1564 Laudonnière sets off for Florida once more.
- 28.VII.1564 Fort Carolina is built.
- 7.VIII.1564 Pedro Menéndez de Avilés obtains bail, after the intervention of Philip II.
- 20.III.1564 Pedro Menéndez de Avilés' "Capitulación".
- 9.V.1565 Jean Ribault's departure for Florida.
- 29.VI.1565 Pedro Menéndez de Avilés leaves for Florida.
- 28.VIII.1565 Pedro Menéndez de Avilés' arrival in Florida.
- 8.IX.1565 The town of San Agustín is founded.

- 18.IX.1565 Pedro Menéndez de Avilés leaves for Fort Carolina.
- 20.IX.1565 Pedro Menéndez de Avilés takes Fort Carolina.
- 28.IX.1565 Pedro Menéndez de Avilés has a further encounter with the French.
- 2.XI.1565 Pedro Menéndez de Avilés has his last encounter with the French.
- VIII.1566 France lodges a formal protest for the events in Florida.
- VIII.1566 Father Martínez dies in Florida.
- 1.XI.1566 Juan Pardo's journey into the northern part of the continent.
- 18.V.1567 Pedro Menéndez de Avilés returns to Spain.
- 29.VI.1567 Pedro Menéndez de Avilés arrives in Spain.
- 22.VIII.1567 Gourgues leaves France for Florida.
- 3.XI.1567 Royal Warrant by which Pedro Menéndez de Avilés is named Captain General of the Armada to pursue the French and English pirates.
- 13.III.1568 The Jesuit expedition to Florida.
- 24.IV.1568 Gourgues takes the fort of San Mateo.
- 3.V.1568 Gourgues returns to France having achieved his revenge.
- 9.VI.1568 The Jesuits arrive in Havana.
- 29.VI.1568 Pedro Menéndez de Avilés arrives in Florida from Spain.
- 1569 The Catholic College is founded in Havana.
- 22.VII.1569 Pedro Menéndez de Avilés returns to Spain looking for help for Florida.
- 10.VII.1569 A Royal Warrant is signed by which Pedro Menéndez de Avilés is made Captain General of the Armada.
- X.1578 Father Segura starts his expedition northwards.
- 16.V.1571 Pedro Menéndez de Avilés returns to Florida.
- 3.VII.1571 Pedro Menéndez de Avilés arrives in Havana having been to Spain in the meantime.

- 12.VII.1571 Pedro Menéndez de Avilés arrives in Florida.  
1572 The Jesuits leave Florida once and for all.  
17.II.1573 Royal Decree by which Pedro Menéndez de Avilés is authorized to make and sell a marine instrument which he himself had devised.  
7.I.1574 Pedro Menéndez de Avilés makes his will in Sanlúcar.  
8.IX.1574 Pedro Menéndez de Avilés is given the Royal Standard as Captain General of the Armada which is to go to Flanders.  
8.IX.1574 Pedro Menéndez de Avilés illness.  
15.IX.1574 Pedro Menéndez de Avilés writes a codicil to his will.  
17.IX.1574 Pedro Menéndez de Avilés' death.  
9.XI.1591 Pedro Menéndez de Avilés' remains are moved from Llanes to the town of his birth.



## VIII

### BIBLIOGRAPHY

I should emphasize that I have mainly used the testimonies of those who were directly involved in the events that I analyse for the writing of this book. Basing a study on original documents is undoubtedly immensely important. The ample correspondence between the Crown and the Adelantados, which was always most meticulously written, has also been extremely useful; it has often shown up unpublished facts.

However, I have not in this way avoided the general histories, written by both North Americans and Spaniards. These have so often served as the point of departure for profound analyses or have helped to clarify situations that are confused.

There have not been many on the other hand. The study of Florida in the XVIth century has been largely ignored for many years, even though a notable effort was initiated a few years ago to broaden the knowledge of the history of this period and place.

#### IN ENGLISH

Ch. Lowery Woodbury, *The Spanish settlements within the Present Limits of the United States, 1562-1574*, New York, 1959. In this book, the author devotes special attention to the Spanish presence in Florida and the confrontation with the French, such as Gorgues' revenge for instance. He gathers information about Jesuit activity in Florida and briefly but interestingly describes the Timucua Indians.



- G. Fairbanks, *History of Florida, 1512-1848*. After a description of the expeditions between 1513 and 1565, the central part of the book constitutes a highly critical study of the encounter between the French and the Spaniards in Florida, both of whom he accuses of extreme cruelty.
- E. Bolton, *Spanish Borderlands, A Chronicle of Old Florida and the Southwest*, Toronto, 1921. The author analyses the causes of the Spanish failure, attributing them mainly to the problematic relationship with the Indians, as well as the lack of gold and the Spaniards' lack of interest in stopping and in cultivating the land.

#### IN SPANISH

- P. Augado Bleye, *Manual de Historia de España*, Madrid, 1964. I have used this book as a basis for analysing Spain in the XVI<sup>th</sup> century. In its second volume, which is devoted to the Catholic Kings and the House of Austria, there is a clear demonstration of the penury of those journeying to the New World. Spain was the centre of a great empire, but its economic resources were not always as extensive as one might imagine.  
Economic matters are similarly studied in the work of J. H. Elliot, *La España imperial, 1469-1716*, Barceona, 1965. Here the author provides interesting details about the importance, between 1503 and 1660, of precious metals for private as well as royal means. He also rigorously analyses the social and economic changes which the discovery implied for what came to be known as «New Spain».
- J. Vicens Vives, *Historia de España y América, social y económica*, Barcelona, 1974. This long five volume book is a social history from antiquity in the Old World and primitive America (tome I) to the XIX<sup>th</sup> and the XX<sup>th</sup> centuries and the independence of America (tome V). On discovering the successive events in the Old and New Worlds, the sense of cause and effect between them becomes apparent.
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- F. de Aparicio, *Historia de América*, Buenos Aires, 1940. The first volume is an introduction to the indigenous world of North America, their arrival and their first settlements.
- F. J. Alegre, *Historia de la Compañía de Jesús*, Rome, 1956, three volumes. This is indispensable for an insight into the role of the Jesuits in Florida and their fruitless attempts at evangelizing. This religious orden coincides with Pedro Menéndez de Avilés' objectives, but conditions in Florida did not suit them.

Of the geographical historians of the XVIth century, I have consulted the *Historia general de las Indias* by G. Fernández de Oviedo, whose book was the first published with this name, and that of F. López de Gomara, Barcelona, 1965. The latter brings the personal information from the Adelantados and other conquistadors. As far as what refers to Florida (which is very short) it goes as far as Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca's expedition, given that this work ended in 1551 when Spain still had not consolidated its presence there. Works by Fernández de Oviedo, as well as by López de Gomara, present a mixture of description and interpretation. In any case, they should certainly be taken into account when it comes to analysing the events of the XVIth century and the sensibility of the intellectuals of the era.



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